V FOR VENDETTA

Larry and Andy Wachowski

Based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore

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FADE IN

In the darkness, we hear a voice, a woman's voice. Her name is Evey.

EVEY (V.O.)
"Remember, remember, the fifth of November, the gunpowder treason and plot.

I know of no reason why the gunpowder treason should ever be forgot."

Her voice has a strength that is metered by a calmness, a deep centered peace that we can feel.

EVEY (V.O.)
Those were almost the very first words he spoke to me and, in a way, that is where this story began, four hundred years ago, in a cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament.

In the darkness, we find a lantern. Guy Fawkes, a dangerous man who wears a goatee, is struggling with a wheelbarrow stacked with barrels of gunpowder.

EVEY (V.O.)
In 1605, Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament.

The wheelbarrow bumps over the heavy stone mortar of the cellar floor. From the dark depths, we hear the sound of dogs.

EVEY (V.O.)
He was caught in the cellars with enough gunpowder to level most of London.

Guy sees lanterns coming from both sides. He tries to run as the dogs reach him first. He grabs for his sword as dozens of pole axes pin him against the tunnel's stone wall.

EVEY (V.O.)
Sometimes I wonder where we would be if he hadn't failed. I wonder if it would have mattered.

In the dim pre-dawn light, Guy is led to the gallows.

EVEY (V.O.)
I suppose the answer is in the rhyme. More than the man, what we must remember is the plot itself.

The coarse noose of rope is snugged up to Guy's throat. He looks into the crowd until he finds a face, a woman's face, staring up at him.

EVEY (V.O.)
For in the plot we find more than just a man, we find the idea of that man, the spirit of that man, and that is what we must never forget.

The lever is thrown and the woman looks down, a tear falling down her face.

EVEY (V.O.)
This, then, is the story of that idea, of that spirit that began with an anarchist's plot four hundred years ago.

Guy's body hangs in silhouette, lifeless against a red morning sun.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE

A young Evey sits on her father's lap, combing her Barbie's hair.

EVEY (V.O.)
I was born near the end of the millennium, the year 1997. My father used to say that people were so afraid that the world was going to end that they were willing it to happen.

Her father sits beside her mother on the living room couch, watching the news. From the look on their faces, the news is bad.

EVEY (V.O.)
I don't remember much of the century's turn. I don't remember the market crash or the plague or any of the Trafalgar riots.

The television flickers with images of heavily armed soldiers fighting in a shelled city.

EVEY (V.O.)
I've read about them since but I don't recall how any of them impacted my life except for the fear. They would hide it from me, like a secret between them.

Little Evey sees her father staring at her mother. They take hold of each other's hand, clasping them tight.

EVEY (V.O.)
But I could feel it.

EXT. CITY STREET

It is a new day. People are gathered along the street as if they were waiting for a parade.

EVEY (V.O.)
Of the chaos that seemed to swallow the beginning of the 21st century, there is one thing I do remember.

Evey holds her father's hand. Unable to see what is coming, she can hear it.

EVEY (V.O.)
Very clearly, I can remember that sound.

We hear them, hundreds of marching soldiers.

EVEY (V.O.)
And I remember those boots, black leather that gleamed bright in the morning sun. I had never seen such boots. All moving in perfect unison.

Little Evey hides in the forest of adults, clinging to her father's leg, staring as row after row of boots march by with military precision.

EXT. CITY STREET

In the midst of a political rally for the emerging new party calling itself Norsefire, we find little Evey now on her father's shoulders.

Dascombe, a young man, paces the podium, inciting the crowd.

DASCOMBE
The time has come, London, to return to a bygone age, an age of tradition, an age of values that have been disparaged and all but forgotten. What this country needs is a leader! A true leader to remind us of that age. A righteous leader with the strength of his moral convictions to do what must be done. I give you that man! I give you our leader! Adam Susan!

Adam Susan rises and the crowd cheers. Evey's father looks at her mother and again they clasp hands.

EVEY (V.O.)
It must have seemed so easy to them. They offered such a simple deal: give up control and we will restore order.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE

Little Evey is asleep in her bedroom.

EVEY (V.O.)
At first, the arrests were political. Dissidents. Radicals. Liberals.

A loud crash of splintering wood wakes her up.

EVEY (V.O.)
When my parents were younger, they had been activists. They had marched with Labor in the great train strike.

The sound of heavy boots swarms through the house.

LITTLE EVEY
Mommy?

Her bedroom door bursts open and a heavily armed soldier scoops her up.

She is carried through the dark house which is filled with soldiers. On the floor of the living room, she sees her parents being bound with plastic zip-ties.

MOTHER
My daughter! Don't take my daughter!

FATHER
Evey! Evey!

LITTLE EVEY
Mommy! Daddy!

A heavy black hood is pulled over each of her parent's heads as Evey is carried out of the house.

EVEY (V.O.)
I never saw them again. Overnight, my life, my entire world was erased.

INT. BATHROOM

A nun with a switch in her crossed arms watches as Evey and several other little girls scrub the floor of a dormitory bathroom.

EVEY (V.O.)
It was done so quickly and violently, so completely, that it began to seem that it had never even existed.

A tear rolls down Little Evey's cheek.

EXT. HOUSE

A gay man is dragged violently from his Piccadilly home. Outside, he sees his lover being forced to the cobblestones.

EVEY (V.O.)
The homosexuals were next. What God had started with AIDS had to be finished by man. It was God's work. That's what we were told.

He reaches for him as the clubs rise and fall, vicious and bloody.

EVEY (V.O.)
But once they were gone, there was someone else. Someone different.

In another neighborhood, we see the police arresting Pakistanis.

EVEY (V.O.)
Someone dangerous.

In a different area, young black men are packed into a caged van so tightly they are unable to move.

EVEY (V.O.)
There were those who understood what was happening, who knew it was wrong but who kept silent.

A young detective named Finch looks down as the van pulls away. When he looks up, another man in a military uniform whose name is Almond is watching him.

EVEY (V.O.)
And in the vacuum of that silence, order was imposed.

Finch sticks his pipe in his mouth and turns away.

EXT. STREET

Again, we see the marching boots.

EVEY (V.O.)
Order that was like those boots, order that required rigorous discipline. Order that is possible only when each pair of boots is exactly the same, where each single step falls with every step. The order of the many shaped into one.

We move through the columns of marching soldiers to a wall where a poster has been plastered up. The poster reads, "Strength Through Purity, Purity Through Faith."

EVEY (V.O.)
Somehow in my heart, I knew it wouldn't last.

As the sound of the marching fades, a shadow falls over the sign.

After a moment, we hear the hiss of spray paint.

EVEY (V.O.)
What they thought they had crushed, the spirit they believed trampled and ground beneath the marching of their boots, rose up, rose as if from a four hundred year old grave, rose to remind us all of that day. .

The shadow sprays a "V" over the poster.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

Close on a loudspeaker. There is one on every major street corner.

FATE (V.O.)
Good evening, London. It's nine o'clock, the fourth of November in the year 2019 and this is the voice of Fate broadcasting on 275 and 285 of the medium wave.

Beneath the loudspeaker is a surveillance system labeled, "For your protection."

Bubble eyed lenses iris at the end of stalks that move, insect-like, racheting and clicking as they watch a little girl pedal her bicycle. The little girl glances nervously over her shoulder up at the mechanical eyes watching her.

FATE (V.O.)
People of London, be advised--

INT. EVEY'S APARTMENT

There is a radio on a small makeup table.

FATE (V.O.)
--that Braxton and Streathon are quarantine zones as of today.

Evey is now a young woman. She slips into a dress that is little more than a nightgown. She tries to adjust it, pulling it down at the hem, pulling it up at the thin shoulder straps, but it is like trying to hide behind a lamppost.

FATE (V.O.)
It is suggested that these areas be avoided for reasons of health and safety.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Another radio in a room that seems to be of another world.

FATE (V.O.)
Good news following the productivity reports from Herefordshire indicating a possible end to meat rationing starting mid-February.

A man enters the room as he once entered the world. His body is lean and strong and though we do not see his face, there is a strength in his carriage, a power to his presence.

INT. EVEY'S APARTMENT

She packs tissue paper into the toes of a pair of high heels that are too big for her.

FATE (V.O.)
Police raided seventeen homes in the Birmingham area, uncovering what is believed to be a major terrorist ring.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

We move over a dressing bureau, past a wig and over a pair of black leather gloves, moving until we find the mask; it is like something from the masquerade ball of another era. It has an exaggerated goatee, harlequin cheeks and a smile, forever fixed, at once be-guiling and be-deviling.

FATE (V.O.)
Twenty eight people, eight of them women, are currently in detention awaiting trial.

INT. EVEY'S APARTMENT

Evey coats her lips with a lascivious red. She stares into the mirror, her makeup like a mask over her own face.

FATE (V.O.)
And that is the face of London tonight.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

The man, now fully dressed in cloak, hat, and mask gazes into the mirror.

This is V.

FATE (V.O.)
And this is the voice of Fate signing off and bidding you a pleasant evening.

EXT. CITY STREET

Close on Evey's high heels, stumbling and awkward as she walks down a dark cobblestoned street.

EXT. CITY STREET

Close on V's boots walking in the opposite direction so that it seems they are walking towards each other.

EVEY (V.O.)
I don't know what brought us together that night. I had never been to that part of Westminster but ever since I've known him, I've stopped believing in coincidence.

EXT. CITY STREET

Evey looks up and sees a man standing mostly in shadow.

EVEY
Excuse me? Uh... excuse me, Mister?

The man turns around. It is not V.

EVEY
Would you like... uh, would you like to sleep with me?

He smiles.

EVEY
I mean, for money.

MAN
That is the clumsiest bit of propositioning I've ever heard.

EVEY
Oh god, I'm sorry.

MAN
Is this your first time, darling?

EVEY
Yes, no. I mean for money. But I know what you want and I'll do it.

She presses her body to his, using her little girl eyes and her woman's mouth.

EVEY
Anything you want, mister. Please. I need the money. I know I'm young but I promise I know what I'm doing.

MAN
No. You don't know what you're doing.

He pulls out his wallet and shows her a badge. The sight of it knocks the breath out of her.

EVEY
Christ, you're a Fingerman.

FINGERMAN #1
Give the little lady a prize.

FINGERMAN #2
I've got something to give her.

Evey turns and there are more Fingermen behind her.

FINGERMAN #1
Prostitution is a class H offense. Know what that means? It means that we get to exercise our own judicial discretion--

FINGERMAN #2
And you get to swallow it.

The Fingermen laugh.

EVEY
Oh god, please. It's my first time. Please don't hurt me.

FINGERMAN
Gosh, fellas, look at those big innocent eyes. What do you think?

FINGERMAN #3
Spare the rod, spoil the child.

Fingerman #2 laughs hard as he drops his pants.

EVEY
Oh no!

He shoves her face first against a brick wall, lifting her dress to expose her bottom.

EVEY
Please, don't!

FINGERMAN #3
You heard the man, sweetie. This rod's for your own good.

Suddenly, they are no longer alone.

V
"The multiplying villainies of nature do swarm upon him."

FINGERMAN #3
What the hell--

V
"And fortune, on his damned quarrel, smiling, showed like a rebel's whore."

FINGERMAN #1
We're police officers, pal.

FINGERMAN #4
We're with the Finger.

FINGERMAN #3
So bugger off!

V
"Disdaining fortune with his brandished steel, which smoked with bloody execution."

In the clenched fist of black leather, we see a flash of steel.

FINGERMAN #1
He's got a knife!

V attacks and at once we know this is no normal human being. A single blow sends the largest of the Fingermen flying backwards.

But more than his strength, it is his speed.

A gun is cocked but before the hammer falls, a knife is buried in the Fingerman's chest and--

Before the body falls, the knife is gone.

It takes a handful of seconds and three bodies lay on the ground. V turns to the last Fingerman who is struggling to pull his pants up.

FINGERMAN #3
Jesus Christ! Don't. hurt me!

V steps forward and he screams, bolting while holding his pants up.

V
Good evening.

EVEY
Who-- Who are you?

V
Me? I imagine all manner of names shall be heaped upon my humble visage but, for now, let us simply say I am the villain.

He throws wide his cloak and bows deeply to her.

V
And you would be?

EVEY
Evey.

V
Of course.

They hear sirens rushing towards them. In a blink, he scoops her up and dashes into the shadows of a narrow alleyway.

EXT. ROOFTOPS

Police cars and several ambulances swarm over the area with the dead Fingermen.

V watches them from above.

EVEY
Why did you do that? Why did you... help me?

V
Why indeed?

He takes out an old antique pocket watch. It is almost midnight.

V
Almost time.

EVEY
For what?

V
For the music.

EVEY
Music?

V
Yes, music. My music. You see, Evey, I am a performer.

EVEY
Is that why you're wearing a mask?

V
We all wear masks. Life creates them and forces us to find the one that fits. Do you know what day it is?

EVEY
Uh...November fourth.

V
Not for long.

He looks out where, rising above the rooftops, he can see Big Ben.

V
"Remember, remember, the fifth of November, the gunpowder treason and plot. I know of no reason why the gunpowder treason should ever be forgot."

The second hand sweeps into the final minute.

V
Tell me, Evey, what good is an actor that plays his part to an empty theatre?

EVEY
I don't know.

V
Nor do I. That's why you are here. I need you, Evey. I need someone to listen.

EVEY
To your music?

V
Yes. Yes, to my music.

From his sleeve, he pulls a conductor's wand.

V
Can you hear it? It's already begun.

He begins to lightly tap the wand in the air and, very faintly, we hear it.

EVEY
I can't hear anything.

V
At first, you have to listen very carefully...

He continues to conduct and we begin to hear the music, violins and horns that seem almost like a whisper or a wind that steadily swells.

V
Ahh, yes. There it is. Beautiful, is it not?

He turns to the parapet, his gestures growing grander as the music rises and we recognize Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture.

The music mounts a climax and V points the wand at Big Ben as cymbals crash--

Big Ben explodes with such force the world seems to shake, while--

V, smiling, always smiling, points again with another crescendo and--

The statue of justice is blown to smithereens.

V nods in appreciation while mustering the music towards it's finale as fireworks begin lighting up the sky.

EVEY
Oh my...

Everywhere across the city, people stand transfixed by the dazzling shimmer of the fireworks until--

A strobing final blitz leaves a single, starry image floating in the smoke filled sky.

It is the letter V.

EVEY
It's beautiful...

V
Thank you.

From every direction, the city screams with the panicked sound of sirens.

EXT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

A massive modern building that is the seat of the new government.

A long, black car pulls up to the entrance. Adam Susan gets out, wearing a long black trenchcoat over his pajamas. He is the Leader and he looks older, heavier, and meaner.

He hurries past the heavily armed guards, barely acknowledging the snap and cock of their Nazi-like salute.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The Leader enters his main chambers and we see the Fate computer system.

It is the cerebral cortex for a vast intelligence network. Information can almost be felt coursing through its hard drives.

The Leader sits, at once regaining a measure of composure. He takes a deep calming breath and accesses the system.

Dozens of monitors fill with images from all across the city, most of them are of the damage caused by V.

LEADER
Gentlemen, I will hear your reports now. Mr. Heyer, speak for the Eye.

Conrad Heyer appears on one of the screens. He is at his desk inside the command center for the Eye, the governmental organization responsible for the visual surveillance systems.

CONRAD
We have less than two minutes of usable footage, Leader. It took the suspect less than a minute to dispatch the Finger's vice patrol.

On an insert screen, we see grainy footage of V rescuing Evey from one of the pole-mounted cameras.

CONRAD
As you can see, the suspect's reflex speed is extraordinary. As is his strength.

As the last body falls, V seems to pause and looks back over his shoulder straight into the camera.

LEADER
Freeze it!

The Leader stares at the smiling face.

CONRAD
I'm afraid the mask makes retinal identification impossible.

LEADER
Mr. Etheridge, report for the Ear!

Bunny Etheridge appears on another screen. Behind him, huge spooling reels of audiotape wind constantly.

ETHERIDGE
We were able to triangulate the origin of the fireworks. We also are currently monitoring a lot of phone surveillance indicating a high percentage of conversation concerned with the explosions. All suspect or significant transcripts are being forwarded to Mr. Almond.

LEADER
Very good. Mr. Finch, speak for the Nose.

Finch, no longer the same young man, stands at the site of the fireworks launch.

FINCH
Thanks to Etheridge, we found the launch for the fireworks. These appear to be individually weighted flares and we have found traces of the same chemicals at both of the detonation sites which leads us to conclude that, despite a level of sophistication, these devices are all home-made with over the counter chemicals, making them impossible to trace. Whoever he is, Leader, he's good.

LEADER
Thank you for that professional annotation.

An intercom opens.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
Leader, Mr. Almond has arrived.

LEADER
Very good. Gentlemen, keep me informed of any further developments. England prevails.

They answer in unison as Almond enters the office. His face is harder but he has the same violent gleam in his eye.

The Leader turns in his chair.

LEADER
Mr. Almond, do you know what this is behind me?

ALMOND
Uh... the Fate computer system, sir?

LEADER
No. No sir. It's more than that. This, this computer is a symbol, Mr. Almond. A symbol of the highest attainable goal of mankind. Do you know what that goal is, Mr. Almond?

Almond does not. The Leader leaps from his chair while pounding the desk.

LEADER
Control, Mr. Almond! Control! The world around us is a changing, directionless, amoral morass and it is up to man and man alone to set things right!

He moves around the desk at Almond.

LEADER
Without control, man is nothing more than any other stinking, sweating, brute animal. Control, Mr. Almond. The control that we have painstakingly built up over the last ten years. Now, do you understand what happened last night?

ALMOND
We... lost control.

LEADER
Yes, Mr. Almond. Last night someone did the unthinkable. Someone hurt us. It is imperative that we act swiftly and precisely. I want that man found, Mr. Almond. I want his head or, by god, I'll have yours.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Evey is wearing a blindfold and V leads her by her fingertips, guiding her almost as if they were dancing...

His fingers slip free of her and she reaches out.

EVEY
Wait. I've lost you.

V
No, you haven't.

He is behind her and he removes the blindfold, revealing his house to her.

EVEY
Oh...

It is a labyrinth of interconnecting underground tunnels and rooms.

The gallery is the main room as it is filled with an amazing collection of human culture. There is art that spans from the

renaissance to the painted covers of Eerie comics. Literature that ranges from Shakespeare to Spillane, philosophy from Plato to Bukowski, and a vast collection of nonfiction.

There are movie posters everywhere and an entire wall is lined with videocassettes.

A jukebox stands in front of an enormous vinyl and CD collection of music.

EVEY
A jukebox? Where did you get it?

V
I saved it. Like everything here.

She punches a button and Billie Holliday begins to sing.

EVEY
Oh, it's beautiful. I've never heard anything like it.

V
Of course not. You grew up in their world. Art is created by individuals and there are no individuals in a world where you are told what to think.

EVEY
This place is amazing.

V
You're welcome to stay.

She stops suddenly and looks at him. The offer is terribly exciting but it is so unlike anything she has ever done that it's almost impossible to imagine.

EVEY
Stay here... with you?

V
Yes. If you like.

EVEY
I... I don't even know your name.

V
I don't have a name. But you can call me V.

EVEY
V? V... I like that.

And she returns his smile.

EXT. JORDAN TOWER

The only operating broadcast tower in London: home of the Mouth.

INT. RADIO BROADCAST BOOTH

Lewis Prothero leans forward and lets his voice pour like syrup over the microphone.

PROTHERO
Good morning, London. This is the voice of Fate-- Damn.

He stops and coughs.

PROTHERO
Good morning-- ack. Good morning Lond-- Goddammit! Where is my bloody tea?!

In the control booth, Roger Dascombe, his hair thinner now, rubs his temple.

DASCOMBE
Would someone get his lordship his bloody tea?

He clicks on the microphone.

DASCOMBE
Lewis, they want this report on the first hour--

PROTHERO
I know. I know. Damned inconvenient this entire affair. Fine. Let's try again.

He clears his voice and the red "record" light turns on.

PROTHERO
Good morning, London. It is 6 am. the fifth of November 2019 and this is the voice of Fate. The new day brings good news and bright prospects from overseas, where negotiations with New China are moving in a positive direction. Last night's scheduled demolition of two deteriorating landmarks went off without a hitch.

Dascombe is unable to stop himself from smiling.

PROTHERO
Spokesmen for the Interior ministry said both structures were severely damaged and judged to be a danger to the unsuspecting public. Plans for new landmarks are well underway.

Prothero sits back, shaking his head.

PROTHERO
Do you believe this crap, Dascombe?

DASCOMBE
It's not our job to believe it, Lewis. Our job is to tell the people--

PROTHERO
"Exactly what they tell us." I know but do you think that people will believe it?

DASCOMBE
They will if it's you that's telling it to them. Now let's try it again.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V is alone, listening to the first morning broadcast.

PROTHERO (V.O.)
... plans for new landmarks are already well underway.

He clicks off the radio. Walking down a hall, he stops and peers into Evey's new bedroom.

She is fast asleep, looking remarkably at peace. Quietly, he shuts the door.

EXT. TRAIN STATION

People are hurrying to board a departing train.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Prothero is staring out his window.

PROTHERO
"Remember, remember, the fifth of November..."

He talks to his bodyguards almost as if talking to himself.

PROTHERO
Do you suppose that's why he did it?

BODYGUARD #1
Sir, who did what, sir?

PROTHERO
Guy Fawkes. He tried to blow up Parliament.

The guards look at each other, confused.

PROTHERO
Don't they teach history in school anymore?

BODYGUARD #1
Sir, we're both straight military, sir.

BODYGUARD #2
Sir, yes, sir. I was fighting in Ireland by the time I was sixteen.

PROTHERO
Yes, of course. My mistake.

He turns back to his window.

EXT. RAILROAD

The train rumbles along, heading for a tunnel.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Prothero watches the countryside rolling past.

PROTHERO
I love trains. I remember riding the undergrounds with my father. Shame they shut them all down.

Bodyguard #1 looks out the opposite window just as the train enters the tunnel.

BODYGUARD
What the hell's that!

EXT. TRAIN

For a flashing instant, we see V in silhouette, cloak swirling around him like dark wings as he jumps from the bridge onto the train.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Prothero and Bodyguard #2 stare at Bodyguard #1.

BODYGUARD #1
I thought I saw a man jumping onto the train.

BODYGUARD #2
The train's doing almost seventy. It would break his legs.

BODYGUARD #1
You're right. I...It must have been rags.

EXT. TRAIN

Deep in the tunnel, a dark figure glides across the rooftops.

INT. CONDUCTOR'S CAB

The conductor hears something on the roof. He peers up just as V swings down, smashing feet first into the cab.

INT. TRAIN CAR

The brakes suddenly lock, throwing Bodyguard #2 into Prothero.

PROTHERO
Get off of me!

A moment later, the lights are cut off and the entire train is plunged into complete darkness.

BODYGUARD #2
What the fuck is going on?

BODYGUARD #1
Lock the car doors.

PROTHERO
I have a lighter... somewhere...

BODYGUARD #2
I can't find the lock-- Wait. Hey wha--

There is a muffled shriek followed by a sharp snap.

BODYGUARD #1
What's happening--

There is another sound, like the leather slap of a boxer pounding a heavy bag, followed by the sound of the heavy bag collapsing onto the floor.

PROTHERO
I found it!

He flicks on the lighter and, in the dim light of its flame, he sees the smiling face.

PROTHERO
Oh god.

V sits casually, arms folded, across from Prothero. The bodyguards lay dead on the floor.

PROTHERO
Who are you? What do you want? Money? Is that it?

V just smiles.

PROTHERO
Wait, wait. You're, you're the one that blew the Bailey.

V nods and Prothero's eyes go wide.

PROTHERO
You're making a mistake. I'm nobody--

On the floor, he sees the bodyguard's gun. He kills the lighter and dives for it.

In the darkness, we hear the struggle. It ends quickly. When the lighter flicks back on, V is holding it and the gun.

PROTHERO
Oh god, what do you want?

V
I've come to offer you a choice, Commander Prothero.

PROTHERO
What-- What did you call me?

V
Commander Prothero.

Prothero's heart begins to pound.

V
That was your title at Larkhill. You remember Larkhill, don't you, Commander?

EXT. LARKHILL RESETTLEMENT CAMP - FLASHBACK

A sign reads, "Larkhill Resettlement Camp."

V (V.O.)
Where they sent the undesirables.

A caged truck packed with minorities rolls into the gates which are topped with spools of razor wire.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Prothero is sweating.

PROTHERO
I don't know what you're talking about.

V
Maybe I can help your memory. Let's see. Larkhill opened in the summer of 2009. You were appointed its commander. You wore a uniform in those days. You looked very good in it.

INT. LARKHILL - PROTHERO'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK

Prothero admires his uniform in the mirror.

V (V.O.)
You were a man of many responsibilities. You made sure Larkhill made all its quotas, especially the oven quotas even though they required an excessive amount of maintenance.

EXT. LARKHILL - OVENS

We see a detail of black and Indian men, shoveling mounds of black ash from a series of furnace like ovens.

As the shovel lifts, we see blackened bones and burnt skulls.

EXT. LARKHILL - MAIN YARD

Prothero saunters through the lines of camp prisoners.

V (V.O.)
But there was one task you took to with exceptional relish. Remember the medical block, Commander? I believe you called it the funny farm. You were the one that selected the prisoners. You hand-picked each one.

Prothero steps in front of a woman who remains beautiful despite the suffering she has endured. Prothero smiles.

PROTHERO
Her.

As the guards grab her, we become aware of a man that is staring at Prothero. He is one of the prisoners but we do not see his face.

Prothero notices the man. He doesn't like the way the man is staring at him.

PROTHERO
You.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Prothero is terrified.

PROTHERO
You! You're him, aren't you?

V nods.

PROTHERO
Oh my god! What are you going to do?

V
You gave us a choice, remember, Commander? You said we could cooperate with the doctors or...

V cocks the gun.

V
Hold out your hand.

Trembling, Prothero sticks out his hand. V lets the light die for a moment.

When he flicks it back on, Prothero is holding a long, metal syringe filled with a murky liquid.

PROTHERO
Oh no, no! Please I was just doing what I was told!

V
Of course you were. Now I'm telling you to make a choice. Either you stick that syringe into your neck or--

He presses the gun barrel to Prothero's forehead.

V
I can kill you right now.

Prothero begins to blubber.

V
Crying doesn't help, Commander. I remember there was a woman who had been screaming for two days. You winked at the doctor and laughed. "All in the name of science."

PROTHERO
Please, don't make me do this...

V
It's a difficult choice, isn't it? Certain death versus something that might be... worse. But you never know. There is still a chance. You could survive. Look at me. Now, time's up, commander. Choose.

Anger galvanizes his fear and steadily Prothero lifts the needle towards his neck.

PROTHERO
I'll see you in hell.

He jams the needle in and sinks the plunger.

V
Yes. I'm quite sure you will.

INT. TRAIN

Train workers with flashlights hurry through the cars.

TRAIN MAN
This door's locked!

He slams a shoulder against it and the door gives in.

TRAIN MAN
Holy Christ!

Flashlights sweep over the dead bodyguards. The train man hears a strange gurgling rasp and he turns, finding Prothero in his light.

TRAIN MAN
What happened here?

Prothero is foaming at the mouth while a thick mucus bubbles from his nose. His breath comes in tiny rasps.

TRAIN MAN
Good lord! I need a medic here.

Prothero becomes more animate, trying to tell the man something.

PROTHERO
Fi... Fi... Fi...

TRAIN MAN #2
He's trying to say something.

PROTHERO
Five.

TRAIN MAN #1
Five? Where's the goddamn medic?

PROTHERO
Room five.

Suddenly, his body convulses and blood pours out his ears. His body slumps over.

TRAIN MAN #2
I think he needs a priest.

EXT. TRAIN STATION

The station is swarming with police. A stretcher wheels a body in a black plastic bag out from Prothero's car.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Finch puffs on his pipe, staring at something spray painted on the wall of the train car: a "V" with a circle around it.

DOMINIC
What do you make of this, Mr. Finch?

Dominic, Finch's younger assistant, is holding a flower in his rubber gloved hand.

FINCH
Hmm. It's a rose. A violet carson. I believe. Strange.

DOMINIC
Strange?

FINCH
I didn't think they still existed.

SOLDIER
Mr. Finch! Sir!

Finch turns as a soldier with a radio steps into the car.

SOLDIER
Sir, they want you at headquarters, sir.

FINCH
Now?

SOLDIER
Yes, sir. I'm to transport you immediately.

FINCH
Send the rose to the lab. Also, scrape a sample of this paint and have it analyzed as well. I'll be back as soon as I can.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The door opens and Finch steps in.

LEADER
Ah, Mr. Finch. I sent for you because what I have to say cannot be said over a phone or a radio. What I have to say cannot leave these four walls. Do I make myself clear?

FINCH
Yes, sir.

LEADER
I believe in a few things, Mr. Finch. I believe in god. I believe in the destiny of the Nordic race. And I believe in fascism. The romans invented fascism. They had a symbol for it: a bundle of twigs bound together. One twig could be broken but a bundle would prevail. That is the heart and soul of fascism. Strength in unity. I tell you these things knowing full well that they make you uncomfortable.

FINCH
Well, I...

LEADER
You have in fact expressed your discomfort in several arrest reports, arrests that were, in your opinion, "unnecessary." The fact that you are here, that you are not rotting in a prison cell, is a mark of my respect and admiration for you, for your craft, and for what you have done for this country.

Finch looks at the ground.

LEADER
It is also because I know you, Finch. I know what you are. You're a man like me. A man who understands when they are given a job what must be done. I understand you, Finch, and that is why I can trust you.

He moves in close to Finch.

LEADER
This terrorist knows us, Finch. These attacks are perfectly calculated and they are divisive. He knows what he's doing, Finch. He knows us all too well.

FINCH
You think he's an insider?

LEADER
What I think is that this man must be stopped. Stopped at all costs and no one. I repeat, no one is to be placed above suspicion. Do I make myself clear?

FINCH
Perfectly.

LEADER
England prevails, Mr. Finch.

FINCH
England prevails.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Evey, alone in the Shadow Gallery, stares up at the inscription above the crooked staircase.

EVEY
V,v,v,v,v.

V
I hear your summons, my lady. And obey.

She jumps, V suddenly appearing behind her.

EVEY
Oh, V, you scared me.

She turns back to the carving.

EVEY
I was reading the inscription. What is it?

V
A Latin quotation. A motto. "Vi veri veniversum vivus vici." "By the power of truth. I, while living, have conquered the universe."

She nods.

EVEY
Yes, I suppose you have. This place is the only universe I have right now.

V
Does that bother you?

EVEY
I don't know. I'm so grateful to you-- I just feel I should help you, you know, the way you're helping me. I mean, that's the deal, isn't it?

V drifts over to the big old Wurlitzer, fingers scanning the song list.

V
No deals, Evey. Not unless you want them.

She looks up at the inscription as an old blues song begins to play.

EVEY
I think I do. Part of me wants to stay here forever and never have to face what's going on outside. But that's not right, is it? That's not taking responsibility. Not conquering my universe.

She turns to him.

EVEY
I want to help you, V. I want to do something. Can we make a deal?

V
Yes. I think we can make a deal if you like. I think I know a way you could help me very soon indeed.

Evey smiles nervously.

EVEY
Good. That's that, then.

The blues song curls in the air around them like a heavy incense.

EVEY
V, you said that Latin thing was a quote. Who said it?

V
Nobody you'd have heard of. A German gentleman named Dr. John Faust.

He spins her.

V
He made a deal too.

EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY

The church doors have opened with the flow of parishioners as the final mass of the day has ended.

The tide slowly pours out onto the sidewalk, separating around the clumps of people that conglomerate to network and gossip.

Church bells toll in the orange dusk above them.

Helen Heyer, a woman whose spite and guile are hidden behind her looks and clothes she drapes them with, charges into the gossipers, her trophy husband in tow, a timid looking man that we recognize as Conrad Heyer.

CONRAD
Hello, Rosemary. Derek, how--

Helen's head snaps over at the mention of the name.

HELEN
Derek!

She pushes past Conrad, giving Derek Almond an exuberant kiss on both cheeks.

HELEN
Darling, how are you? Hello, Rosemary.

Always behind her husband, Rosemary Almond smiles nervously as she straightens her drab church dress.

ROSEMARY
Hello.

DEREK
It's so good to see you. Since this bloody terrorist business, the old man has me literally chained to the office.

Helen pouts at him.

HELEN
Oh, you poor dear.

Derek taps the bottom of his cigarette box, drawing one with his lips.

DEREK
It comes with the job. How are things in the Eye, Conrad?

CONRAD
Well, we've been working some bugs out of the new Mark IX fiber optic network, actually--

HELEN
Oh, Conrad, don't be such a bloody bore. Do tell us about the terrorist, Derek. Is it true he blew up Big Ben and the old Bailey?

DEREK
I'm afraid so. We're dealing with a pathological psychotic in the most extreme case. We'll catch him though. I promise.

Helen rubs her white sable against her body.

HELEN
Oh, it sounds dreadfully exciting. Aren't you glad you've got such a ruthless, implacable brute for a husband, Rosemary?

ROSEMARY
Yes, well--

HELEN
Believe me, you're lucky. You could be stuck with a professional peeping tom like Conrad. England's highest paid voyeur, aren't you darling?

CONRAD
Helen, I think we'd better--

HELEN
Oh yes, of course. We have to get back so the little pervert can watch what the neighbors do after Sunday lunch. He's so exciting.

Derek laughs as they climb into their car.

HELEN
Ciao!

DEREK
Goodbye, Helen, Conrad.

Rosemary waves as it pulls off.

ROSEMARY
She's a bit hard on him, isn't she?

Derek sneers at her.

DEREK
Until you're half the woman of Helen's sophistication, I'd keep your little mouth shut.

He throws the cigarette at her feet.

DEREK
Really, just look at the way you dress.

INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY

From above, a hand sweeps aside the red plush curtain.

LILLIMAN
Ah, there they go. My happy and contented flock. Spiritually refreshed and ready to face the world again.

Bishop Anthony Lilliman is a slender man of pious elegance with a warm, beatific smile.

He turns from the window to his valet, Dennis, as Derek and Rosemary get in their car.

LILLIMAN
Did you enjoy the sermon today, Dennis?

DENNIS
Very inspiring, your grace. Though the segue of the forces of Satan among us did strike me as a bit of a curious digression.

He whisks a lint brush over the Bishop's robes before putting them away.

LILLIMAN
Hmm, yes. A trifle purple, I thought. Still, Fate wanted it included and who are we to question the will of the almighty, miserable sinners that we are?

A gentle smile spreads across his mouth.

LILLIMAN
And speaking of sin, I wonder which of the seven deadlies the good lord will see fit to tempt me with today.

Dennis finishes with the Bishop's robes and sweeps the closet door shut.

DENNIS
Perhaps pride, your grace.

Lilliman chuckles.

LILLIMAN
I was thinking of something a little less ethereal. Has the young lady arrived?

DENNIS
The agency informed me she'll be here directly. However, there was a mixup. It's not one of the usual girls. She's a little older.

LILLIMAN
Oh dear. Oh dear. Not too old, I trust?

DENNIS
They promise me she's no more than fifteen.

LILLIMAN
Fifteen, hmm.

The Bishop rubs his cheek, ponderously.

LILLIMAN
Ah well, if Job could bear his disappointments, I suppose I must have the good grace to bear mine. Show her in when she arrives.

DENNIS
Yes, your grace.

EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - NIGHT

A pair of headlights melt through the heavy night's fog as a taxicab pulls into the circle drive.

INT. BISHOP'S QUARTERS

Dennis peers into the Bishop's living quarters.

DENNIS
The young lady, your grace.

LILLIMAN
Oh my!

Standing next to Dennis is Evey, wearing a frilly pink summer dress, pigtails and bows and white ruffled socks.

LILLIMAN
And to think I doubted your loveliness for even an instant. Mea culpa, my child, mea culpa. You are a vision. An angel.

Evey smiles awkwardly.

EVEY
Uh... thank you.

EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - NIGHT

A shadow begins moving across the manicured grounds borne on the thick mist like a dark phantom. V glides toward the rectory, cloak undulating against the dark, wet wind.

INT. BISHOP'S BEDROOM

It is extravagantly furnished, somewhere between posh and pimp. The Bishop is sitting very close to Evey on his plush water bed.

LILLIMAN
Of course, "hate the sin, love the sinner," I always say. Take your dress off, please.

Evey stammers, backing up along the bedside.

EVEY
Listen-- I was kind of hoping--

He paws at her, groping hands pushing the front of her dress down as she backs up against the nightstand.

EVEY
No--

EXT. MAIN GATE - NIGHT

The guards look out into the night, fear suddenly gripping their faces.

V emerges demonically through the parting veils of fog, the white smiling mask bobbing eerily up and down as he rushes them.

A cigarette drops from the first guard's mouth, red embers exploding when it hits the wet cement.

Close as the two guards claw for their side arms and the white hot flash of V's knives--

That slice like talons.

The two men crumple to the ground, clutching their gaping, gurgling wounds. A whisper, V sprints into the courtyard.

INT. BISHOP'S BEDROOM

Evey grabs a metal table lamp and swings it down on the Bishop's head. There is a shuddering clank and he collapses to the floor.

LILLIMAN
You-- You filthy whore!

His blood speckles the white bearskin throw rug as the Bishop slowly rises after the retreating Evey.

LILLIMAN
I'll kill you. you fucking sow.

He charges after her but freezes dead in his tracks as V swings around the corner in front of him.

LILLIMAN
What's this? Who--

V
Please allow me to introduce myself...

V bows.

V
I'm a man of wealth and taste.

LILLIMAN
Dennis?

Instantly, the point of one of V's knives is against the Bishop's throat. V presses a finger to his frozen smile.

V
Shh. It isn't polite to disturb the dead on their journey.

Evey watches from around the corner.

V
A courtesy I'll most respectfully extend to his grace.

EVEY
V?

Lilliman swallows audibly.

EVEY
V, what are you doing?

V
Vi veri veniversum vivus vici. Evey.

Evey looks down at the knives on his belt, dripping blood.

EVEY
Oh no.

She begins backing to the door.

EVEY
You can't kill him!

V
Death has followed his grace the whole of his career. Is it any coincidence it has finally followed him here?

EVEY
Oh god, V. I can't-- I can't--

V turns back to Lilliman as Evey runs.

V
Let us pray.

EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - NIGHT

Evey sprints past the dead guards at the main gate and into the fog.

INT. THE EAR

A cramped control room that looks like something between a radio and television switching room, though it does not broadcast. It receives.

Two operators sit at the main substation as the sounds of lovemaking come over the speakers. The moans are stifled and low, however, as if they were afraid someone was listening.

OPERATOR #1
Bloody hell. Doesn't anybody fuck with feeling anymore?

Operator #1 does not look at him, scrolling through an intricate city map on his computer.

OPERATOR #2
Hey, it's Sunday. Children's hour over at the Abbey.

OPERATOR #1
Let's see what that filthy old pervert is up to.

Operator #1 punches in some coordinates and the sound over the speakers changes to a garbled fart of noise. Two voices drown beneath a cacophony of classical music.

OPERATOR #1
What the--

He tries to dial out the background and suddenly the voices rise clearly above the din.

VOICE #1
...And I saw a black shape against the flames. Oh god. It's you. The man from room five. You've come--

VOICE #2
To collect what's mine.

VOICE #1
I beg you! I don't want to die! Please have mercy!

The two men look at each other. Operator #1 lunging for a red phone.

OPERATOR #1
Get me the Finger. This is an emergency!

INT. BISHOP'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Close on a stain of white vomit and blood on the thick pile of a Persian rug. It is encircled in police chalk.

Pull back to reveal the chalk outline where the body of Bishop Lilliman was found. The circled bloodstain floats above the head like the last word balloon of a crude comic strip character.

The Bishop's quarters is slowly being picked over by a forensic team from the Nose. A photographer's flash bursts against a painted "V" on the wall near the body outline.

At the window, Finch chews on his pipe, staring at a plastic evidence bag that contains a single violet carson rose.

DOMINIC
No prints yet, sir. Just like Protheroe.

FINCH
I want those tapes from the Ear in my office tonight, Dominic.

DOMINIC
Yes, sir. They're on top of it.

Finch turns to a muscular man named Creedy, second in command at the Finger.

FINCH
Any word from your superior, Mr. Creedy?

CREEDY
Mr. Almond doesn't seem to be answering his page, sir. I'm sure he's in the field.

FINCH
Quite.

INT. CONRAD HEYER'S BEDROOM

Grunting like an animal, Derek's face is frozen, locked in the rigor of a violent orgasm. After a moment, he collapses beside Helen onto the sweat soaked sheets.

HELEN
There you go, baby. Now my baby boy can think so much clearer. Can't he?

She grabs her cigarette case and her lighter.

HELEN
You have been thinking, haven't you?

She straddles his chest then lights two cigarettes.

HELEN
I know you have. Ever since this terrorist appeared.

He smiles as she puts one of the cigarettes in his mouth.

HELEN
Oh jesus. that smile. That smile turns me on like nothing else.

She whispers in his ear.

HELEN
Tell me. Tell me what's going on in that ruthless sadistic brain of yours.

DEREK
Everyone is so worried about the terrorist. Especially Susan. You know why? Because nobody knows what he's going to do.

He exhales through his grinding teeth.

DEREK
If I were him. I know what I'd do.

He whispers.

DEREK
I'd blow that fat bastard to kingdom come.

Helen bolts up.

HELEN
No. You're kidding.

DEREK
Am I?

He smiles, blowing more smoke.

DEREK
There's an old train line under the New Government Building. It collapsed when they poured the foundation. You could haul in enough TNT to launch our Leader's ass all the way to the moon.

Helen's eyes gleam as he laughs.

HELEN
You're serious, aren't you?

He eyes her sucking on the cigarette.

DEREK
You need to be careful, Helen. Your mouth is going to get you into trouble one day.

HELEN
Is that the same trouble you love putting in my mouth?

DEREK
You never know who might be listening.

HELEN
I know, Derek. You love your country and you love your party, just like you love your wife.

He glares at her.

HELEN
Derek, I'm sorry. I know I can be a bitch. But that's why you're here, isn't it?

He smiles again and she presses her body to his.

HELEN
This is it, isn't it, Derek? What we've been waiting for. At last, you'll be rid of Susan. I'll be rid of Conrad. And we'll be free. Free, won't we?

His eyes close as he grinds his hips into hers and we rise, drifting up to the ceiling light fixture--

Where we see a tiny hidden microphone.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE - THE NOSE

Finch sits at his desk, staring into the silence of his notepad. He has doodled a little "V" with a circle around it.

He looks up as Dominic enters, holding up a portable cassette player.

DOMINIC
Sorry it took so long. The boys had a devil of a time trying to filter out the background noise.

FINCH
Background noise?

DOMINIC
The perpetrator apparently turned on the Bishop's stereo. Subsequently, a great deal of the tape is useless.

He hands the player to Finch.

FINCH
What music did he play?

DOMINIC
Beethoven. The fifth. I believe.

Finch smiles.

FINCH
Da, da, da, dum. That's code. Morse code.

DOMINIC
Sir?

FINCH
For the letter "V."

Finch punches "play."

Over the small speaker, we hear Evey protesting to V, then run. He stops it.

FINCH
Anything on the girl yet?

DOMINIC
No. The agency said somebody claiming to be Lilliman's valet canceled his Sunday appointment.

Finch starts it again and this time the tape is very fuzzy.

FINCH
What is it?

DOMINIC
23rd Psalm.

We recognize some of the words though muted and crackly.

TAPE
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...

DOMINIC
It goes on like that for a while. Fairly incoherent except we could make out a few words in this part. Transubstantiation.

Finch nods, understanding.

DOMINIC
That miracle business when the wafer transforms into the body of Christ.

FINCH
He made him eat a host.

DOMINIC
Yes. Listen to this part.

The tape becomes somewhat clearer as the music rests.

TAPE
...And at the moment this enters your mouth it becomes the flesh of the savior? Yes... please... And whatever it is made of now it will become the body of Christ? Yes... yes...

They eye each other.

TAPE
I want you to swallow it.

DOMINIC
There's a couple of funny human noises...

FINCH
And then just Beethoven's fifth.

He shuts off the tape.

FINCH
We have got the initial path report back. The host was full of cyanide.

Finch picks up the bag with the violet carson.

FINCH
And do you know what?

He rises, sliding into his jacket.

FINCH
When it reached his abdomen, it was still cyanide.

INT. MORGUE

Close on the heavy stitching of a "Y" incision sewn into the chest of a corpse. It is one of the Bishop's guards.

DELIA
Do you have a motive?

Finch is standing next to the cadaver gurney with the corner, Delia Surridge. She is a serious woman, hair wound tight behind her head in a severe bun.

DELIA
I mean, was anything taken?

She fills the dead man's head with cotton and replaces the top of his skull.

FINCH
Just lives.

Pulling at the man's scalp, she stretches it over the replaced skull piece.

FINCH
I know it's too early for your profile but do you have any initial impressions?

DELIA
Well...

She points at a jagged puncture wound at the base of the man's sternum with a ball point pen.

DELIA
He's incredibly powerful. This man's sternum was split like dry wood from the base all the way up to the manubrium.

Finch peers into the hole.

DELIA
And he's resourceful. On that table behind you is a breakdown of all the chemicals found in Prothero's blood stream.

Finch hefts the pile of computer paper.

FINCH
Bloody hell.

DELIA
There were hundreds of different chemicals in him. From trinitrotoluene to estrogen to motor oil.

He flips through the document, biting into the wooden end of his pipe.

FINCH
Perhaps Fate will make something more of all this. I certainly can't.

DELIA
The Leader finally authorized an uplink for you? He must be getting nervous.

FINCH
Quite. Government directed terrorism never sews healthy ideas into the public. Oh, that reminds me.

Finch pulls the evidence bag from his pocket.

FINCH
Can you tell us anything about this?

Delia's eyes lock onto the violet carson.

FINCH
We found one in the carriage with Prothero and this one in the Bishop's quarters. A violet carson.

He hands it to her.

FINCH
I heard that strain had died off. Thought a botanist might shed some light on it. Delia?

Delia, riveted to the rose, suddenly looks up to him.

DELIA
Yes-- Yes, of course.

FINCH
Magic. I'll drop by tomorrow then.

He turns, leaving her with the rose.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V relaxes with a book in an overstuffed reading chair, a violet carson rose resting on a table next to him. He begins to read a passage aloud.

V
"There is more behind and inside of V than any of us had suspected. Not who, but what: what is she?"

He places the book down. Thomas Pynchon's "V."

V rises, lifting the rose and moving into the darkness of the Shadow Gallery.

EXT. EMPTY STREET

A small figure moves down the dark wet street, the cobblestones glistening like black scales.

The huddled figure arcs across the street in the shadows, avoiding the pools of streetlight. It is Evey, a frightened look on her face.

INT. KITTY KAT KELLER

A woman in combat boots, fishnets, and a tight fitting soldier's uniform is in the middle of a cheeky number on stage in this smoky burlesque bar. It is a popular place with locals and Fingermen.

Peter Creedy squeezes through the crowd, angling for the back of the bar where a number of loud Fingermen are drinking.

CREEDY
What's all this, then, Harper? I get a radio that a man's down and in need of assistance?

HARPER
I ain't gone down yet but I sure do need some assistance.

Creedy leans in.

CREEDY
Are you flat broke already?

They break up in laughter, led by Creedy who sits next to Harper, pouring himself a drink.

LOUT
How'd you sneak away, Creedy? Almond off buggering that blonde chippy?

HARPER
The one with the tits?

They all begin to hoot and whistle.

CREEDY
What I wouldn't give for a piece of that.

LOUT
She could serve a tray of drinks on those thingies.

HARPER
I bet you get your chance with her sooner than later, Creedy, with the way Almond's crackin' up.

LOUT
Bloody bugger's losing his marbles.

HARPER
Terrorist or no, if that bastard gives me another double shift, I'll stomp his fucking head.

Creedy raises his drink.

CREEDY
Aye. This nonsense has put a serious strain on my drinking. I think I was actually sober today.

LOUT
I'll drink to that.

HARPER
We need to get a real man of the people in that director's position. Like Creedy here.

Everyone cheers in agreement.

CREEDY
Well, it's good to know when the shit hits the fan who your real friends are.

They salute and drink.

INT. ALMOND HOME

Derek Almond sits hunched under a desk lamp, pumping the cylinders of his revolver with a wire brush.

Rosemary shuffles up to him, her frumpy gown gathered around her.

ROSEMARY
Derek--

He blows down one of the cylinders, not looking up.

DEREK
I don't want to hear it, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY
Derek, please! We can't carry on like this.

Derek stares at the gun, rage building.

ROSEMARY
You don't talk to me. You don't eat with me. You don't have sex--

Derek leaps up, slugging her.

Rosemary clatters to the ground in tears, Derek glowering over her.

DEREK
I don't have to take any crap from you! I have that fat bastard riding me all day. I don't want to listen to you, so shut your fat gob!

He leans into her face.

DEREK
And me not wanting to fuck you is obvious. Take a look at yourself.

He sits back in front of the gun, wiping it down.

DEREK
Get out of my sight. I'm cleaning my gun.

INT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S HOME

Dr. Surridge sits somberly in the dark, street light filtering in from the open curtains.

Her eyes fixed on the violet carson as she slowly turns it over in her hands, fingers tracing the soft petals.

After a moment, she stands, letting it fall from her lap.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE - THE NOSE

Finch turns as Dominic bursts in.

DOMINIC
I got it!

FINCH
A connection?

Dominic waves a printout.

DOMINIC
Larkhill Resettlement Camp. Prothero's and Lilliman's employment records show they both held positions there at similar times.

FINCH
What about codename V?

DOMINIC
Most of Larkhill's records were destroyed for security reasons but I did uncover an old standard procedures and operations manual.

Dominic smiles.

DOMINIC
In special case studies, medical research groups used roman numerals to identify test inmates.

FINCH
Five is the letter V. Brilliant. Dominic.

Finch slides in front of his computer.

FINCH
All we need is Larkhill's employment records.

INT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S BEDROOM

The covers pulled protectively up around her. Delia rests in a light, uneasy sleep.

Suddenly, an eye pops open as she awakes, catching a familiar scent. She slowly sits up and inhales.

DELIA
Roses.

She closes her eyes.

DELIA
It's you, isn't it? You've come to kill me.

From the shadows, V answers.

V
Yes.

Tears begin to streak her face.

DELIA
Oh thank god. Thank god.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE - THE NOSE

Dominic hangs over Finch's shoulder as Larkhill's employment record comes up.

Finch's mouth falls open.

FINCH
Oh my god.

Row after row of names scroll by and at the end of each bio are the words: deceased, file closed.

FINCH
Oh bloody hell.

The data banks unfurl like a mass grave.

DOMINIC
He's killed them all? It's not possible.

Finch stops, staring at the one name whose file is not closed--

FINCH
Oh no.

Dr. Delia Surridge.

INT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S BEDROOM

V floats on the edge of the room's shadows, a dark angel.

V
Are you afraid?

DELIA
No, no. I thought I would be, but I'm not. I'm--

She looks at the hovering, smiling mask.

DELIA
Relieved.

She starts to cry again.

DELIA
Oh god, all these years. All this waiting. And somehow I always knew you'd come back.

Delia thinks back.

DELIA
When I saw you that night-- the night you escaped, you were standing against the flames and you looked straight at me.

The mask almost nods.

DELIA
I knew then that one day you'd come looking for me, that you'd find me.

Her voice drops to an almost confessional whisper.

DELIA
What-- what happened at Larkhill. What we did-- What I did. That terrible knowledge, it's been with me so long. That I could do things like that.

Delia rubs the salty tears from her eyes.

DELIA
For years, I blamed it on the government, on the authority I could never stand up to. But living so long with the knowledge of what I did has made me understand otherwise. I alone was accountable.

V watches her.

DELIA
There is something wrong with us. With all of mankind. With me. Something evil that made me enjoy what I did. Some hideous flaw.

Her voice almost trails off.

DELIA
We deserve to be culled. We deserve it.

INT. ALMOND BEDROOM

Light sweeps across Rosemary from the opening bedroom door as she sobs softly in bed. Derek enters, holding a bottle of whiskey and his clean gun.

She sits up as Derek looms over her.

ROSEMARY
Derek? What?

He lifts the gun into her bruised face. Her eyebrows cringe as he slowly pulls the trigger.

DEREK
Bang.

Click. It is empty.

DEREK
Don't worry, Rose. I didn't load it.

The phone rings.

DEREK
Not tonight.

He grins evilly at her and answers the bedside phone.

DEREK
Almond. What?! Where?

Derek's drunk eyes light up.

DEREK
Oh god, yes! God, thank you!

He slams the phone down, charging out of the room.

EXT. KITTY KAT KELLER

A gaggle of drunks exit the bar, laughing and singing as they pass a small figure.

INT. KITTY KAT KELLER

Evey wanders into the bar amidst the lustful screams and cat-calls for the line of high stepping, semi-clothed girls on stage.

She stares out into the crowd, not sure why she is here when a man approaches her: Creedy. His sloppy smile indicates he has had a few drinks.

CREEDY
You look lost.

She looks blankly at him.

CREEDY
Can I buy you a drink?

EVEY
No... I made a mistake.

She turns for the door.

EVEY
I have to find someone.

Creedy frowns as his radio crackles.

CREEDY
Well I didn't like the looks of you anyway--

RADIO
All units, all units. Code red. Converge in Plaistow to apprehend codename V.

CREEDY
Bloody hell!

He screams to the Fingermen at the back.

CREEDY
It's him! We got him!

Evey watches as they storm out of the bar, then follows.

EXT. CITY STREET

The emergency lights blaring, Finch's car squeals around a corner.

INT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S BEDROOM

V hovers ghostly at Delia's bedside.

DELIA
It's funny, I was given one of your roses today. I wasn't sure you were the terrorist until I saw it.

She manages a smile.

DELIA
What a strange coincidence. That I should be given it today.

V
There are no coincidences, Delia. Only the illusion of coincidence.

He reaches into his cloak.

V
I have another rose. This one is for you.

He hands it to her.

DELIA
Then you are going to kill me now?

V produces an empty syringe.

V
I killed you ten minutes ago. While you slept.

DELIA
Is there any pain?

V sits on the bed.

V
No. No pain.

DELIA
Thank you.

She stares at the mask.

DELIA
Can I-- Can I see your face again?

V slowly pulls off his hat and lifts his mask. Delia stares into his face.

DELIA
It's beautiful...

The rose falls from her hands.

INT. HALL

V quietly shuts the door as if not to wake her and turns just as--

Derek Almond reaches the top of the stairs.

DEREK
Don't move an inch, you bloody bastard.

He trains his gun.

DEREK
You didn't hear me arrive, did you? Didn't know we'd rumbled you?

He squints.

DEREK
It's all finished, chummy. All of it. The old man told me it was my head or yours and what do you know? It's yours.

The smiling mask stares.

DEREK
Because you're standing over there with your bloody stupid knives and your fancy karate gimmicks--

Derek pulls back the hammer.

DEREK
And I've got a gun.

He smiles.

DEREK
Bang.

Click. He never loaded it.

There is an awkward moment of silence, then V moves--

Cloak opening, filling the hall like a black tidal wave that envelopes Derek. He chokes a scream as V embraces him, slipping a knife above his floating rib.

Derek Almond sputters as he claws at V's mask.

DEREK
Who-- Who are you?

V
Yes, look. Look and tell me what you see.

He rips V's mask off as V thrusts the knife in deeper.

Derek's eyes widen in horror as his life pours out the knife wound.

DEREK
Horrible! God, it's horrible!

V jerks his blade free, letting Derek slip to the ground.

EXT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S HOME

Finch's car bucks up onto the sidewalk.

Finch and Dominic tear out of the car and barrel into the house.

INT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S HOME

At the top of the stairs, they find the dead Derek. Finch rushes past him for the bedroom.

FINCH
Delia?

Inside, he finds her. Her eyes fixed, cold, and dead, a single violet carson in her lap.

FINCH
Get an ambulance.

EXT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S HOME

Evey rushes around a corner to see a crime scene bathed in siren light. She pushes up to the police barricade as the M.E.'s load a draped body into their van.

EVEY
Oh no... V?

She tries to angle around to get a better look when a man in a brown overcoat grabs her from behind and drags her into the alley.

INT. DELIA SURRIDGE'S BEDROOM

From the corner of the room, Finch sits, watching as the M.E.s wheel out Delia's body.

Dominic squeezes past the gurney and crosses toward Finch.

DOMINIC
I'm sorry, sir. You knew the doctor pretty well?

Finch nods.

DOMINIC
We found this on her bureau, sir. It's Dr. Surridge's journal. It covers her years at Larkhill. It might contain the whole story.

Dominic searches for something more to say when Finch does not answer.

After a moment, Finch looks at the book in Dominic's hand, then takes it, leafing through the pages. They flip by, a breathy sigh, rising to a cold wind.

DELIA (V.O.)
May 23rd...

INT. LARKHILL MEDICAL RESEARCH BLOCK - DAY - FLASHBACK

A younger Dr. Surridge, one by one, administers a series of injections to her research stock.

DELIA (V.O.)
Prothero has hand picked my subjects. Four dozen of them, none of which will be any use to me if I don't get to work soon.

She finishes an injection, Prothero encouraging the next subject. We recognize her as the woman Prothero pointed at.

DELIA (V.O.)
They're so weak and pathetic I find myself hating them.

Delia prepares the next dose, a sour look on her face.

DELIA (V.O.)
They don't fight or struggle. Just stare at you with weak eyes.

PROTHERO
Next.

INT. LARKHILL OVENS - DAY - FLASHBACK

Two inmate orderlies are hefting sacked cadavers from a cart into an incinerator.

DELIA (V.O.)
June 9th: Of the original four dozen, over 75% are now deceased. Strangely, no clear patterns have emerged as of yet.

Another body thuds onto the pile.

DELIA (V.O.)
Batch 5 seems to have no common discernible effect on any specicfic group though the men seem slightly more resilient than the women.

When it is full, they move to the next door until the cart is empty.

DELIA (V.O.)
I'm hoping the survivors will provide more answers or my time here will have gone to waste.

Red heat suddenly glows from the oven vents as the orderly throws a series of switches.

INT. LARKHILL MEDICAL RESEARCH BLOCK - FLASHBACK

Dr. Surridge moves down the drab aseptic hallway accompanied by an armed guard. Roman numerals on the doors to each cell ascend to five.

DELIA (V.O.)
June 18: And only five left now. Two men and three women. Which tends to contradict my entry on the 9th.

She pauses at room five.

DELIA (V.O.)
The man in room five is a fascinating case.

She looks through the small chicken wire glass window in the door.

DELIA (V.O.)
Physically, there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with him. No cellular anomalies, nothing.

In the back, just on the edge of the room's shadow, sits the man in room five, silently staring back.

DELIA (V.O.)
Batch five, however, seems to have brought on some kind of psychotic breakdown. He's quite insane.

Dr. Surridge can't seem to break her stare.

DELIA (V.O.)
He has this way of looking through you. Reverand Lilliman won't go near him. He claims that it is the devil in room five. I see him cross himself whenever he passes his door. Still, there's something about him...

EXT. LARKHILL GARDEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Dr. Surridge slowly moves through the Larkhill garden, an incredible abundance of fruits, vegetables and violet carson roses.

DELIA (V.O.)
I'm glad Prothero let room five have a go at the gardening project. He is quite proficient. Prothero was reluctant to allow an inmate access to tool and chemical supply at first but now the fat toad is delighted. The crop has almost doubled.

She traces the petals of a rose with her finger.

DELIA (V.O.)
He also grows roses. Beautiful roses.

INT. LARKHILL LOUNGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Dr. Surridge and several other Larkhill appointees relax after dinner.

DELIA (V.O.)
December 24th: I was in the mess. It was about half past ten when we heard the first explosion.

A massive explosion shakes the building to its very core, its windows shattering and hooded pendulum lights swinging.

EXT. LARKHILL LOUNGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Men and women clutch at their throats as they tumble out into the yard.

DELIA (V.O.)
The ones at the front ran straight into the gas. It was horrible.

They drop to the ground, gasping and vomiting.

The back door is kicked open, Dr. Surridge following two guards.

DELIA (V.O.)
A few of us made it out through the rear door. You could hear men screaming everywhere. I hate the sound of men screaming.

She looks out, men running, collapsing, dying in a yellow green haze that seems everywhere.

DELIA (V.O.)
In the center of the camp, everything was on fire. Everyone running in all directions. We had hardly enough time to get our bearings when the ovens exploded.

Another explosion wracks the compound. The pillar of flame rises into the black sky, dwarfing the men in the camp.

Dr. Surridge sees a gaping hole in the medical block, its insides turned out like an unholy birth.

DELIA (V.O.)
It was the man in room five. I couldn't have known. The chemical supplies, grease solvents, ammonia, fertilizer. He'd been making things with them.

Close on a soldier, doubled over, hacking up bile.

DELIA (V.O.)
Mustard gas...

A sticky blue fire licks up from a blackened body like a dura-flame.

DELIA (V.O.)
And napalm.

Dr. Surridge turns as a silhouette crosses the yard, backlit by a curtain of fire.

DELIA (V.O.)
And in the yard. I saw him. He had the flames behind him. He was naked.

The man stops.

DELIA (V.O.)
He looked at me...

Dr. Surridge seems to wilt under his stare but cannot look away.

DELIA (V.O.)
As if I were an insect. Oh god. As if I were something mounted on a slide.

The flames convulse hypnotically behind him.

DELIA (V.O.)
He looked at me.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

Finch snaps Dr. Surridge's journal shut.

He sits in front of the Leader's desk puffing on his pipe while Susan stares coldly.

FINCH
That's the last entry until six months later when Dr. Surridge is back in London. There is no mention of the man in room five again. End of story.

He tosses the journal on Susan's desk.

FINCH
Except that it wasn't the end of the story.

Finch rises, crossing to the wastebasket.

FINCH
Between 2009 and 2012, over forty men and women who were previously stationed at Larkhill met with what were believed to be accidental deaths. Eventually, only three remained.

He taps his pipe into his hand, pouring the contents into the wastebasket.

FINCH
The three he'd been saving until last.

Finch brushes the ashes from his hands and begins repacking his pipe.

FINCH
Everyone who worked at Larkhill. Everyone who could have identified him. You see there are two possible motives here. Not one.

Susan raises his head.

FINCH
The first is revenge. He escapes from Larkhill and vows to get even with his tormentors. The whole exercise an elaborate, chilling vendetta.

When he finishes repacking the pipe, he replaces it in his mouth.

FINCH
That's the explanation that I find most reassuring, funnily enough. Because that means he's finished. It's over now.

Finch begins relighting his pipe.

FINCH
The second motive is more sinister. Like I said, everyone who could have identified him is dead.

A flame leaps into the air.

FINCH
What if he's just been clearing the ground?

Another burst.

FINCH
What if he's planning something else?

The lighter slips back into his pocket.

FINCH
You see, the diary we found was in full view. We didn't have to search for it. He left it there. He wanted us to find it. He wanted us to know the story. Or...

Finch returns to his chair, letting out a huge cloud.

FINCH
For all we know, the diary could be a complete and utter fake. Codename V could have written it himself.

Finch leans forward.

FINCH
He's playing games with us. He might never have been at Larkhill at all. Do you see? It could all be another smoke screen, a false trail, another cover story--

LEADER
Enough!

Susan punches the desk.

LEADER
Mr. Finch, would you please explain to me the nature of this meeting?! Because I was under the impression that you had some information about the terrorist, codename V!

And punches it again until his fist hurts.

LEADER
No more questions, understand! I want answers! I am not interested in where he grew up, what kind of flowers he likes or his favorite color!

Susan's collar chokes his face to an unnatural crimson.

LEADER
Do I make myself clear?

FINCH
Yes, Leader.

After a moment, Finch stands, Susan hanging on his last word.

LEADER
Dismissed. England prevails, Mr. Finch.

Finch turns, Susan calling after him as he leaves.

SUSAN
Mr. Finch, the girl. Do you have anything on the girl?

Finch pauses at the door.

FINCH
No, Leader. Not yet.

INT. CELL

Evey stirs as voices drift in from the hall outside her door.

MAN
Wake up, cow.

Three guards are silhouetted in the doorway of a cramped jail cell. Still sluggish from the chloroform, Evey looks down at the coarse slipover she's now wearing.

One of the men, Rossiter, crosses toward Evey, swinging a pair of shackles. He grabs Evey, slamming her face down into the hard cot, driving a knee between her shoulder blades.

Evey screams.

GUARD #1
Tsk. This pathetic whore is the famous Miss Hammond?

The shackles bite down on her wrists as they laugh in the hall.

EVEY
You've made a mistake.

Rossiter stands her up, shoving her into the wall.

ROSSITER
Shut up.

EVEY
Please. I haven't done anything--

He slides a thick hood over her head.

ROSSITER
I said shut your hole!

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

The hood is lifted from her head. Evey squints hard, awash in a blinding, burning light.

A man sits, unmoving, at a desk across from her, a guard at his side, both backlit by a harsh white kliegs.

Evey's eyes start to water as she blinks.

INTERROGATOR
Do you know why you're here, Evey Hammond?

EVEY
No, please, I didn't do anything.

INTERROGATOR
Allow me to be more precise. Did you participate in the murder of Dr. Delia Surridge?

EVEY
No.

INTERROGATOR
Did you participate in the murder of Derek Almond, director of the Finger?

EVEY
No, I--

INTERROGATOR
Did you participate in the murder of Bishop Anthony Lilliman?

EVEY
Oh god. I don't--

INTERROGATOR
Have you ever participated in a terrorist act against your country?

EVEY
No--

INTERROGATOR
What is the identity of codename V?

EVEY
I don't know.

INTERROGATOR
You are a lying cunt.

A monitor next to the desk lights up. From the snowy static, an image begins to form.

A girl is talking to a man. She is shoving her hips at him, propositioning him. When more men appear from the alley, Evey realizes she is watching herself.

EVEY
They were going to rape me, kill me--

Rossiter grabs a handful of her hair.

ROSSITER
Shut up.

She swallows hard when she sees V emerge on the screen. The image freezes on his smiling face.

INTERROGATOR
This board will not tolerate any more of your lies, Ms. Hammond. We have over 120 minutes of audio and videotape and 75 pages of testimonials from eye witnesses that identify you as an accomplice to the terrorist, codename V.

The monitor blinks off.

INTERROGATOR
Do you want to know why you're here? You are formally being brought up on charges of murder on fourteen counts and sedition against your Leader and country which brings an automatic sentence of death.

EVEY
Please. I didn't do anything.

INTERROGATOR
Process the prisoner and return her to her cell until she is more cooperative.

Rossiter slips the hood back over Evey's head.

INT. PROCESSING ROOM

Evey cries as a rough hand runs a pair of electric clippers over her head. Huge sheaves of her hair fall to the ground.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CELL

Evey lies crumpled on the hard floor, unmoving, as a tray of food is slid through a slot at the bottom of the door.

She watches as a rat crosses from a hole in the wall, sniffing the murky rendered gelatin in the wooden bowl.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. PROCESSING ROOM

Evey hangs limply from a set of manacles as she is washed and deloused by heavy hands.

She coughs in the yellow bug powder cloud as it burns her eyes and the red welts on her back.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CELL

Evey is curled up on the cot like a dry fetus, now gaunt arms wrapped around her legs. She blinks when she hears something moving in the rat hole.

Evey raises her head as something is pushed through the crevice.

Tentative fingers search the hole, pulling out a length of toilet paper. Over every inch of it is a delicately scrawled message.

We move into the rathole, its edges slowly filling the frame until black.

EXT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Pull back from a shadow, the outline of the interrogator's silhouette against sharp light coming into frame.

EVEY (V.O.)
I read her letter. Hid it. Slept. Woke. They questioned me. And I read her letter again.

Rossiter is buckling Evey's thin arms and legs into a chair. Her now frail frame can barely hold up the frayed brown slipover.

EVEY (V.O.)
Over and over...

On the table in front of her, there is a large wash basin of water. Rossiter dunks her head into it.

EVEY (V.O.)
Her name was Valerie.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

A teacher reads from her lesson plan in front of rows and rows of uniformed pubescents in this all girl private school. Her voice drones on and on like Muzak.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I was born in a rainy burg in Nottingham in 1975. I passed my eleven plus and went to girl's grammar.

A blonde tomboy sneaks a smile to her curly haired friend next to her.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I met my first girlfriend at school. Her name was Sara. Her wrists. Her wrists were beautiful.

Her hand slides across the desk, fingers tickling the young flesh on Sara's wrist.

The teacher's voice slows, dropping octaves, becoming--

INT. BIOLOGY LAB - DAY - FLASHBACK

A man's voice.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I sat in biology class staring at the pickled rabbit fetus while Mr. Herd said it was an adolescent phase that people outgrew.

Valerie looks at Sara across the room, her head down in shame.

VALERIE (V.O.)
Sara did. I didn't.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Two teenage girls stand in front of a middle aged couple. They are holding hands.

VALERIE (V.O.)
In 1994, I stopped pretending and took a girl called Christine home to meet my parents.

The greying woman repeats the sign of the cross over and over, sobbing into a handkerchief. Her husband's face is contorted in disgust.

VALERIE (V.O.)
A week later I moved to London to go to college and study drama. My mother said I broke her heart.

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

Two young women cuddle on a park bench under a London summer sky, feeding the pigeons.

VALERIE (V.O.)
But it was my integrity that was important. Is that so selfish? It sells for so little but it's all we have left in this place...

The black haired girl nibbles on the blonde's ear.

VALERIE (V.O.)
It is the very last inch of us...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Evey struggles against Rossiter's weight who keeps her head submerged.

VALERIE (V.O.)
But within that inch we are free.

INTERROGATOR
Enough.

Rossiter wrenches back and Evey sucks hard for air, coughing out water.

INTERROGATOR
Now Miss Hammond, let us review the facts.

Evey stares at him, eyes red, heart pounding in her ears.

INTERROGATOR
You work for codename V. Codename V killed Delia Surridge and then Derek Almond with your help and that is why you were found outside her home.

Evey begins to shake her head, water sluicing off her thin face.

INTERROGATOR
Isn't that what happened, Miss Hammond?

EVEY
No. No, that isn't true--

INTERROGATOR
Oh dear, Rossiter?

Rossiter grabs Evey's neck--

EVEY
No, wait!

Plunging her head into the bowl. Water fills Evey's nose and ears.

VALERIE (V.O.)
London. I was happy in London.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The packed house watches as a Prince kneels before a woman's bare foot with a slipper of glass.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I played Dandini in Cinderella.

The woman glances into the dark sea of faces.

VALERIE (V.O.)
The world was strange and rustling with invisible crowds behind the hot lights and all that breathless glamour.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY - FLASHBACK

Two women weep in each other's arms, embracing in a perfect knee high meadow.

VALERIE (V.O.)
Work improved. I got small film roles, then bigger ones.

The blonde woman brushes away a tear from the other's cheek.

VALERIE (V.O.)
In 2006, I starred in "The Salt Flats." That's where I met Ruth. We fell in love.

We pull back and see we are on location for a movie and the two women are being filmed.

INT. CONDO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ruth and Valerie sit on the couch watching television. On the table behind them is a beautiful bouquet of violet carson roses.

VALERIE (V.O.)
Every Valentine's Day she sent me roses and, oh god, we had so much. Those were the best three years of my life.

The two women stare at the newscast in tears, the sound of marching coming from the set's speakers.

VALERIE (V.O.)
In 2010, they came.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

The sound of marching explodes as columns of men in brown uniforms and jack boots fill the streets.

VALERIE (V.O.)
And after that there were no more roses...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Rossiter presses his elbow onto Evey's neck, holding her submerged.

VALERIE (V.O.)
Not for anybody.

Rossiter lets Evey up. Her red burnt lungs gulp at the air.

VALERIE (V.O.)
After the takeover, they started rounding up the gays. They took Ruth while she was out looking for food.

Evey blinks hard, black fireworks exploding in her eyes.

VALERIE (V.O.)
Why are they so frightened of us?

She wheezes, on the edge of unconsciousness.

VALERIE (V.O.)
They burned her face with cigarettes and made her give them my name. She signed a statement saying I'd seduced her.

The interrogator's voice melts into a slag heap of sound with the hot, rhythmic pounding in her ears.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I didn't blame her. God, I loved her but I didn't blame her.

Rossiter uncuffs Evey, slipping the black bag over her head.

VALERIE (V.O.)
But she did.

Evey's knees buckle as he forces her to stand.

VALERIE (V.O.)
She killed herself in her cell. She couldn't live with betraying me, with giving up that last inch. Oh, Ruth.

Evey weaves down the hall, Rossiter shoving her from behind.

VALERIE (V.O.)
They came for me. They shaved off my hair. They held my head down a toilet and told lesbian jokes. They brought me here and pumped me full of chemicals.

The cell door swings open.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I can't feel my tongue. I can't speak.

Rossiter yanks the hood from her head and pushes her in.

VALERIE (V.O.)
It is strange that my life should end in such a terrible place but for three years I had roses and apologized to nobody.

The iron door slams shut, lock ringing in the stale air.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I shall die here. Every inch of me shall perish...

Evey rolls to her knees.

VALERIE (V.O.)
Except one.

She crawls for the rat hole.

VALERIE (V.O.)
An inch. It is small and fragile and it's the only thing in the world that's worth having.

Her shaking hand pulls the letter from the stone crevice.

VALERIE (V.O.)
We must never lose it or sell it or give it away. We must never let them take it from us.

Evey clutches it like a rosary as she begins to cry.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I don't know who you are but I hope you escape this place. I hope that the world turns and things get better and that one day people have roses again.

She holds the note to her face, her tears soaking into the fragile paper.

VALERIE (V.O.)
I don't know who you are but I love you. I love you. Valerie.

Slowly, Evey slips away, succumbing to blackness.

EVEY (V.O.)
I had come to know every inch of those four walls in that dark hell and they knew every inch of me. Every inch...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Loud lights blare against Evey's solemn face.

EVEY (V.O.)
Except one.

A typed document sits on a small tray table in front of her.

INTERROGATOR
"My name is Evey Hammond. On the 5th of November 2019, I was abducted by the terrorist known as codename V and then taken against my will to an unknown location."

Rossiter hovers just behind her as the Interrogator reads her confession.

INTERROGATOR
"Once there, I was systematically brainwashed by means physical and psychological. I was frequently subjected to sexual abuse during this period."

Evey's expression is unchanging.

INTERROGATOR
"Eventually I was terrorized into helping him commit the murders of Derek Almond, Dr. Delia Surridge, and Anthony Lilliman, Bishop of Westminster."

Rossiter drops a pen on the table.

INTERROGATOR
"I, the undersigned, swear that the above statement is genuine and that it was not signed by means of intimidation."

The pen slowly rocks to a stop.

INTERROGATOR
We'd like you to sign that for us, Miss Hammond. Where we've put the little cross.

She blinks.

EVEY
No.

INTERROGATOR
As you wish.

Rossiter begins unbuckling Evey's restraints.

INTERROGATOR
Escort Miss Hammond back to her cell, Rossiter, where she will wait while you arrange a wet detail of six men.

He forces Evey to her feet.

INTERROGATOR
Then take her out behind the chemical sheds and shoot her.

INT. CELL

The door opens behind Evey as she rereads Valerie's letter for the last time.

ROSSITER
It's time, unless you want to change your mind.

She holds the tattered piece of toilet paper to her chest.

ROSSITER
Sign that statement. You could be out inside three years. Perhaps they'd find you a job with the Finger.

Evey closes her eyes.

EVEY
Thank you but I'd rather die behind the chemical sheds.

Her last words hang in the air.

ROSSITER
Then there's nothing left to threaten you with, is there? You are free.

He turns and leaves.

EVEY
What?

She listens as his footsteps fade down the hall, the door hanging weirdly open.

Evey takes a few tentative steps toward the door and sticks her head out into the empty hall, peering down both ways.

Slowly, she emerges from her cell, retracing her path down the hall that her blindfold never allowed her to see.

Quietly inching along the wall, Evey peeks around a corner, gasping at the rigid guard standing off to the side. There is something about the man's frozen stare that keeps her from running.

Evey straightens and crosses to the guard.

It is a mannequin.

She touches him, the wheeled platform he is mounted on rolling back against the wall.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

The door creaks open as Evey enters the room where for so long she was questioned and tortured.

She crosses to the frozen Interrogator sitting at his desk.

Her finger brushes lightly against his plastic hand, then Evey raps a knuckle on his hollow wooden head. Around his neck a small speaker hangs from a cord.

Evey drifts uneasily into a back room where a discarded prison guard's uniform hangs on a rack. On a table next to a wig and pair of gloves, the rat looks up at her through the bars of its tiny cage.

She moves through another door, the wind suddenly knocked from her chest as she finally sees where her prison was built--

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V steps from the shadows.

V
Welcome home, Evey.

EVEY
You...

Her mouth hangs open.

EVEY
You did this...to me.

Evey's rail thin figure begins to shake.

EVEY
You did this to me!

She stumbles against the wall, unable to support herself.

EVEY
You-- You hit me and-- and cut my hair. It was you. It was just you all this time.

She doubles over, covering her face as she bursts into tears.

EVEY
You tortured me. You tortured me--

Evey looks up at him, body shivering as he quietly glides toward her.

EVEY
Oh god, why?

V
Because I love you, Evey. Because I wanted to set you free.

EVEY
Love?

A look of horror twists her starved face.

EVEY
Set me free? Don't you realize?

Slender fingers ball into fists.

EVEY
Don't you realize what you did to me? You nearly drove me mad!

Disgust and anger light up her eyes.

EVEY
I hate you.

Her little, wiry body coils tight as she circles him.

EVEY
I hate you! Set me free? You put me in a prison to set me free?!

V
You were already in a prison. You've been in a prison all your life.

EVEY
Shut up! I don't want to hear it. I wasn't in a prison. I was happy! I was happy here--

V
Happiness is the most insidious prison of all, Evey.

EVEY
That's warped! That's evil and it's wrong! What gives you the right to judge? Who are you to say what's not good enough?!

V
You were born in a prison, Evey. I didn't put you there. I just showed you the bars. You've been in a prison so long, you no longer believe there's an outside world.

She wheels away from him, covering her ears, trying to get away from his voice.

EVEY
Shut up! You're mad! I don't want to hear it!

V
That's because you're afraid, Evey. You're afraid because you can feel freedom closing in on you. You're afraid because freedom is terrifying.

Evey falls, stumbling through the labyrinth of the Shadow Gallery.

EVEY
I can't feel anything! There's nothing left to feel! Don't you understand?

V
Don't back away from it, Evey. Part of you understands the truth even as part pretends not to.

She collapses, head pounding.

V
Woman, this is the most important moment in your life. Don't run from it.

EVEY
I don't know what-- Oh god-- I can't breathe--

V crouches next to her.

V
Good. You're almost there. Go closer. Feel the shape of it.

EVEY
What are you doing to me? I can't breathe--

V
You were in a cell. They offered you a choice between the death of your principles and the death of your body.

He cradles her as she hyperventilates, tears streaming down her face.

EVEY
I feel-- I feel like I'm going to burst.

V
You said you'd rather die. You faced the fear of your own death and you were calm. Try to feel now what you felt then.

EVEY
Oh god-- I felt--

The mask hovers over her.

EVEY
Like an angel...

He squeezes her shuddering body.

EVEY
Oh god, V, I'm so scared. What's happening to me?

V
The door of the cage is open, Evey. All that you feel is the wind from outside. Don't be afraid.

Gently, he lifts her.

V
Try to walk. The lift will take us to the roof.

EVEY
The roof? Outside?

He helps her to an open elevator.

EVEY
I-- I don't want to be blindfolded.

V
No, Evey. No more blindfolds.

The cage in the elevator rattles shut.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The two figures stand in the door of the roof access, a raging tempest oozing from a split sky.

Something draws Evey out into the storm.

Slowly, she walks beneath it, the wind and rain pounding against her thin frame. Evey lets the coarse slipover fall to the ground and stares straight up into the storm, naked, the elements soaking into her very being.

V moves up behind her.

V
Do you feel it?

EVEY
Everything's so-- different.

V
I know. Five years ago, I too stared beneath a night like this. Naked under a roaring sky.

A low rumble of thunder washes over London.

V
The night is yours, Evey. Seize it. Encircle it within your arms.

His words buffet against her with the sheets of rain.

V
Bury it in your heart up to the hilt.

She raises her arms to embrace the raging torrent.

V
Become transfixed and transfigured--

A jagged bolt of lightning shatters the sky.

V
Forever.

EXT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

Finch gets out of a police car and looks up the black face of the modern building. He sighs and taps his pipe against the heel of his shoe.

DASCOMBE
Finch!

Finch turns to find Dascombe hurrying towards him.

DASCOMBE
Do you know what this is all about?

FINCH
No, but I can guess.

DASCOMBE
What?

FINCH
"Remember, remember, the fifth of November."

DASCOMBE
Oh come on. He's long gone. He has to be. He did what he came to do and it's over.

Finch chews on his pipe.

DASCOMBE
Isn't it?

FINCH
Not for us.

He turns and heads into the building.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

A dark November sky hangs like a shroud over the building.

LEADER (V.O.)
A year, gentlemen.

INT. COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM

The heads of each department are gathered around a table of black granite.

Peter Creedy, sitting back out of the lights, is the new head of the Finger.

LEADER
I have given you almost a year and you have given me nothing. Nothing!

He glares at Finch.

DASCOMBE
Now Adam, there is no one better than Finch and you know it.

LEADER
Yes, Mr. Dascombe, I do know it. It is that very fact that keeps me awake at night, wondering if perhaps there is a reason that Mr. Finch has failed.

FINCH
What are you saying?

LEADER
I'm saying that perhaps I don't know you as well as I thought I did.

FINCH
Are you asking for my resignation?

LEADER
No, I am asking for some goddamn results!

DASCOMBE
It's not Finch's fault, Adam.

CONRAD
We've all been looking. The man simply disappeared.

ETHERIDGE
Vanished.

DASCOMBE
He's gone, Adam. It's over.

The Leader trembles like a volcano set to blow.

LEADER
It's over, is it? He's gone. Vanished, you say?

The Leader grabs a large box from the floor and hurls reams of computer printout across the table.

LEADER
Transcripts recorded over the last thirty days in which the terrorist was talked about or mentioned in a positive context. This is only thirty days!

He punches a "play" button and a wall of monitors blink on. It is a recording of a television variety show.

A character that is made to look like Adam Susan is giving a speech. A woman is dressed like V except that the only thing she is wearing under her cloak is a garter belt, stockings and high heels.

V sneaks up behind Susan and yanks his pants down. Susan is outraged but when he gives chase he trips over his pants. The audience hoots and howls.

The Leader kills the tape.

LEADER
Is this what you consider, "disappeared?"

DASCOMBE
For god's sake, Adam, it's a stupid variety show.

LEADER
Mr. Creedy, I want the producers, writers, and actors of that "stupid variety show" arrested and charged with sedition.

CREEDY
Yes, sir.

DASCOMBE
You can't be serious--

LEADER
Push me, Roger, push me and you'll find out how serious I am.

He stares each of them to silence.

LEADER
This, this V is still out there. I can feel him like a sickness worming its way into the hearts and minds of the public. Something must be done, and done quickly, to exorcise this demon for the very soul of this country is at stake.

He pauses.

LEADER
That is why I am compelled to give each and every one of you notice that if by the fifth of November you are still giving me nothing more than excuses, I will have to revoke your party status and terminate your positions.

Everyone is stunned.

LEADER
Mr. Creedy, I will speak with you in private. The rest of you are dismissed. England prevails.

INT. LEADER'S PRIVATE QUARTERS

The Leader stands at the window.

LEADER
Mr. Creedy, as the new head of the Finger, you are the most important member of my cabinet.

CREEDY
I, uh, appreciate your faith in me.

LEADER
Your predecessor, Mr. Almond, was a good man, a man who understood what strength in unity meant, a man who, above all, loved his country. I need to know if you are such a man.

His eyes bore into him.

LEADER
Do you love your country, Mr. Creedy?

EXT. ALLEYWAY

A police car is parked in a dark alley. It is raining and the windows of the car are completely steamed.

CREEDY
Oh god, yes!

He is sweating, his knuckles white as he squeezes the steering wheel, panting.

We hear a noise like a very wet kiss and then a woman's voice.

HELEN
"The most important member of my cabinet." Yes it is, isn't it, dear?

Helen lifts her head out of his lap. Her lipstick is smeared about her mouth.

CREEDY
Oh, don't stop.

HELEN
I stop when you stop. What did he say next?

CREEDY
I can't--

She whispers in his ear while playing with his lap.

HELEN
Come on, Peter, what are you afraid of? Almond used to tell me everything and you're twice the man he was.

CREEDY
He asked me... if I loved my country.

HELEN
Oh yes. I can tell you do love your country, almost as much as you love this...

She lowers her head into his lap.

CREEDY
Oh god...

HELEN
Go on.

CREEDY
Then he asked me to do something... oh, oh...

HELEN
What?

CREEDY
Helen, I can't. I can't tell you.

Helen lifts her head.

HELEN
He told you to frame someone as the terrorist.

CREEDY
My god?! How did you know that?

HELEN
I know Adam Susan. Now who was it?

CREEDY
No way. I can't tell you that.

HELEN
Yes you can, honey. You can and you will. You have to trust me, love. We're going to help each other.

CREEDY
Helen, please.

HELEN
Look at that face. You see? You're just bursting to tell me.

Her head drops back down. Creedy moans.

HELEN
Now who was it?

CREEDY
It was... Fi... Fi... FINCH!

The name seems to orgasm from his mouth.

INT. FINCH'S APARTMENT

Finch sits alone in his modest apartment, reading a book. The book is Koesterler's, "The Roots of Coincidence."

An old CD player is playing music, a Bach piano concerto.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V is playing the exact same concerto on his piano, his gloved fingers gracefully flitting across the keys.

Evey enters the gallery. Her hair has grown out but is still short. She projects a kind of strength that comes from a deep inner peace.

V coaxes the final delicate notes and lets them softly fade.

EVEY
That was beautiful.

She walks up to him and takes the smiling face in her hands.

EVEY
I've wanted to do this for a long time.

She bends and gently kisses the frozen lips.

EVEY
Thank you, V. Thank you for everything you've done for me.

V
You did it all yourself, Evey. I just provided the backdrop but the drama was all your own.

EVEY
It was a good backdrop. I believed it. I really did. It's still a bit hard for me to accept that it wasn't real. That it was just you. Especially the letter.

She takes the letter from . : pocket.

EVEY
It is a beautiful letter, V. Every time I read it I could feel Valerie, almost like she was holding me. I believed in her most of all. I believed that she loved me and I loved her back.

She looks down.

EVEY
I feel a bit foolish telling you this. I know that you must have written it and thought you should have it back.

V
But I didn't write that letter, Evey.

EVEY
What?

V
Come with me.

INT. VALERIE'S ROOM

It is a shrine. The walls are covered with movie posters and reviews and pictures of an actress named Valerie Page. We recognize her as the woman chosen for the medical block just before V.

Everywhere there are flower boxes filled with blooming roses; violet carsons.

EVEY
Valerie?

V
Yes. Valerie Page. She was the woman in room four.

EVEY
She's beautiful.

V
She wrote the letter just before she died. I delivered it to you as it was delivered to me. The words you wept over were the same words that transformed me.

Evey smiles and bends to smell the roses.

EVEY
Roses. You grew them for her.

V
Yes.

EVEY
They're beautiful.

V
Evey, do you know what day it is?

EVEY
Two days before the first day we met.

V
You remembered.

EVEY
You're planning something, aren't you, V?

V
You know me too well now.

EVEY
What are you going to do?

V
I'm going to fulfill an old promise.

Evey cocks an eyebrow.

V
I'll show you.

INT. UNDERGROUND STAIRWELL

Carrying a lantern, V leads Evey down a dark stone staircase.

EVEY
I've never been here before.

V
Yes. It is the deepest part of my home. Once you know it, I should think you'll know everything.

He pushes a button and a secret passage opens in a heavy stone wall.

There is a small narrow series of passageways that he guides her through, leading to another door. Evey steps out into an underground subway station.

INT. VICTORIA STATION

Parked beside the concrete platform is a beautiful antique train car.

EVEY
Oh, V, it's lovely. Where on earth did you find it?

V
In a way, I suppose it really found me.

Evey steps into the train car and finds it filled with little packages wrapped in wax paper.

EVEY
What's in these packages?

V
Gelignite.

She screams and almost drops one.

V
Careful.

EVEY
What are you going to do with all of it?

V
I told you. I'm going to finish what was started four hundred years ago.

EVEY
Where does this train go?

V
This is the old Victoria line but it is blocked. blocked somewhere between Whitehall and St.. James.

EVEY
Whitehall... V, that's the New Government Building.

V nods.

EVEY
But the underground has been shut down for years. How are you going to make it run without any power?

V
I just thought I might ask them to turn it on for me.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The Leader sits bathed in the flickering images of the Fate computer.

LEADER
Yes, Mr. Creedy?

CREEDY
Everything's set, sir. No worries.

LEADER
When?

CREEDY
Tonight.

On one of the screens, a television program has just begun.

ANNOUNCER
Tonight on Tales from the Bible, a story of treachery and betrayal from the Book of Daniel.

We cut from that screen to another screen--

INT. JORDAN TOWER - CONTROL BOOTH

The television studio where Roger Dascombe surveys a large bank of monitors filled with the images of typically vapid television entertainment.

DASCOMBE
All of London's waiting. Ready, two. And here we go--

A player locks on as a recorded program begins. We move in as the logo slashes across the screen: Storm Saxon.

ANNOUNCER
Tonight. England's greatest hero repels the forces of darkness in a brand new episode.

We pull back from the show's opening teaser and find ourselves looking at a small television.

INT. JORDAN TOWER

In the delivery bay at the back of Jordan tower, five security guards are riveted to the heroic actions of Storm Saxon.

HEIDI
Oh, Storm. Save me! Save me!

STORM
You mongrel trash, if you harm her!

MONGREL TRASH
Look out, de white debil has a laser lugar!

Behind them, a shadowy figure in a cloak and tall hat enters the loading bay.

GUARD
Hey, what the--?

They all turn and find a smiling V.

They go for their weapons. V goes for them. It is brutal and quick, knives slicing in bloody arcs, bodies kicked and thrown with superhuman power.

The TV crashes to the ground and we move in at it as Storm Saxon stands triumphant beside his buxom lass.

HEIDI
Oh Storm, hold me. Hold me tight.

We pull back on another television screen inside--

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

Dominic is chewing on a hamburger, engrossed in Storm Saxon. Across the room, Finch is reading the "Roots of Coincidence."

FINCH
I don't know how you stand that tripe.

Dominic answers with a mouthful of cheeseburger.

DOMINIC
Es Gooh.

Finch shakes his head, reaching for his pipe. He realizes he is out of tobacco. He slides open the bottom desk drawer and his eyes almost pop out of his head.

He stares into the drawer like someone staring at his own tombstone.

DOMINIC
Finch? Finch, what's wrong?

Slowly, he lifts something from the drawer. On his desk, he lays out several knives, a cloak, a hat, and a smiling mask.

DOMINIC
What the hell?

Finch lifts the mask and almost has to laugh.

FINCH
Don't you see, Dominic?

He puts the mask to his face.

FINCH
I'm V.

INT. JORDAN TOWER

V emerges from an elevator and immediately attacks several more guards. A surveillance camera watches as V steps over their slumped, broken bodies.

INT. CONTROL CENTER

The security guard sees V on the monitor coming directly down the hall.

GUARD
Bloody hell!

He grabs the machine gun, aiming it just as V kicks open the door.

GUARD
Freeze!

V stops. At least five guards have trained their weapons on him. He is surrounded.

Slowly, he lifts his arms as though surrendering. His cloak opens, revealing enough TNT to level the entire building. In his hand is the plunger detonator.

GUARD
Fuck all.

V nods.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

The door bursts open as Creedy and a group of heavily armed Fingermen muscle in.

DOMINIC
Creedy? What the hell's going on?

CREEDY
I'm here to arrest Mr. Finch for acts of treason and terrorism.

DOMINIC
You can't be serious.

CREEDY
If I were you, boy, I'd shut my hole unless you want to start explaining why you didn't say nothing about Mr. Finch's secret identity.

INT. JORDAN TOWER

V follows Roger Dascombe into the main control booth. The door shuts behind them and they are alone.

All around them are the laugh tracks and gunshots of the evening's entertainment.

V puts his hand into his cloak and pulls out a videotape. He hands it to Dascombe.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

Finch glares at Creedy.

FINCH
Why don't you just shoot me, Creedy? Wouldn't that make everything a lot simpler?

CREEDY
Yeah, I suppose it would.

Creedy smiles, his finger tightening on the trigger when--

DOMINIC
Holy Christ! Creedy, you stupid ape! If Finch is V then tell me who is that?

He points at the television where V sits calmly at a desk in front of the "VTV" logo.

V
Good evening, London.

CREEDY
Bloody fuckin' hell.

V
I thought it was time we had a little talk.

FINCH
He has to be at Jordan tower. Come on!

Finch and Dominic rush out of the room. Creedy looks at his confused men.

CREEDY
Don't just stand there! Follow them!

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

V smiles at the horrified Adam Susan.

V
Are you sitting comfortably? Good. Then I'll begin.

The Leader screams, pounding on Fate.

LEADER
Damn you! Damn you!

He hits the intercom.

LEADER
Lieutenant, ready my transport. I want every armed man within a hundred miles at Jordan tower. Now!

We move in at VTV.

V
Right now, I imagine there are hundreds of soldiers rushing here to kill me because someone does not want us to talk.

We pull back in--

INT. LIVING ROOM

A family watching television. In the background, two children are squabbling.

MOTHER
Hush. Turn it up.

The husband does. V's voice gets louder as we move towards him.

V
They are afraid that I am going to say the things that are not supposed to be said. They are afraid that I am going to say the truth.

INT. APARTMENT

A man sits on his couch, mesmerized by V.

V
The truth is that there is something terribly wrong with this country, isn't there? If you look about, you witness cruelty, injustice and despotism. But what do you do about it? What can you do?

He pops his beer tab and the beer foams over the couch but he doesn't seem to notice.

INT. FINCH'S POLICE CAR

The car races wildly towards Jordan tower as Finch and Dominic listen to the broadcast on the radio.

V (V.O.)
You are but a single individual. How can you possibly make any difference? Individuals have no power in this modern world. That is what you've been taught because that is what they need you to believe. But it is not true.

INT. LEADER'S TRANSPORT

The Leader seethes, staring at three television monitors in his limo which are all filled with V.

V
This is why they are afraid and the reason that I am here; to remind you that it is individuals who always hold the power. The real power. Individuals like me. And individuals like you.

INT. KITTY KAT KELLER

The bar is almost completely soundless except for the voice of V. People stare at the television as if the moment were somehow suspended in time.

V
I have come to offer you a deal. If you accept, I will give you a different world. A world without curfews, without soldiers and surveillance systems. A world that is not run by other men but that is run by you. I am offering you a second chance.

EXT. JORDAN TOWER

The military forces have begun to swarm.

V
Four hundred years ago, a great citizen made a most significant contribution to our common culture. It was a contribution forged in secrecy and stealth although it is best remembered in noise and bright light.

EXT. TELEVISION STORE

A crowd has gathered, watching through the window.

V
To commemorate that glorious night at precisely the stroke of midnight, the edifice of their world will erupt with enough sound and fury to shake the earth. All I ask is that you join me at the gates to watch as the past is erased, the pathway cleared so that together we can start toward a new day.

EXT. JORDAN TOWER

The Leader climbs out of his limo and is met by one of his captains.

LEADER
I want this man dead! I want him shot on sight!

CAPTAIN
Yes, sir.

INT. FINCH'S CAR

Finch can see the forces gathering outside Jordan tower.

V (V.O.)
But, you ask, who am I to make such promises? A fair question but hardly necessary as you know me already. To know me any more you need only look to a mirror.

Finch catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH

VTV fills every screen.

V
Truth be told, this wasn't even my idea, was it? If you think back, you'll remember that night, whispering in your lover's arms. I became a part of your plan just as you have now become part of mine. Give me the line of the queen and I'll give you your secret dream.

INT. JORDAN TOWER - HALLWAY

A heavy battering ram is rushed down the hall, carried by four soldiers.

V (V.O.)
On the twelfth stroke of the fifth day of the eleventh month, I hope we shall all meet again.

EXT. TELEVISION STORE

The crowd is much larger.

V
Until then, I bid you goodnight.

Every screen suddenly goes black. The crowd turns to each other, unsure of what to do.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH

The door explodes open. V is standing alone, almost as if waiting for them.

Before he can even move, they shoot. Machine gun fire lights up the room. V's body dances and jerks backward, smashing through an observation window--

Falling to the television stage below.

INT. HALL

A path is cleared for the Leader. As he heads into the television studio, an armored soldier is heading in the opposite direction.

It is impossible to tell because of the dark face plate but it looks like the soldier is smiling.

The Leader shoves his way onto the main stage. A group of soldiers is gathered around the body.

LEADER
Who was it? Who was he?

The mask is pried off, revealing the lifeless face of Roger Dascombe. To the Leader, it is an obvious revelation.

LEADER
Roger Dascombe! Of course. Of course! It makes such perfect sense.

CAPTAIN
Sir, I think there has been a mistake.

LEADER
No! There is no mistake!

CAPTAIN
But sir, there are people that say they saw both the terrorist and Dascombe together--

LEADER
Who? Who are these people? They must be detained immediately. Whatever they saw or whatever they think they saw is subordinate to the truth and that truth is that Roger Dascombe is the terrorist and the terrorist is dead!

FINCH
But I thought I was the terrorist.

Finch's voice stops the Leader cold.

LEADER
Finch, what are you doing here?

FINCH
Since I'm not in jail and since you have another, even more convenient suspect, I'm guessing the charges have been dropped.

LEADER
Be careful, Finch.

FINCH
I am careful, sir. Always. That is why I suggest that a search of this building begin immediately.

LEADER
The terrorist is dead!

FINCH
With all due respect, I disagree and I believe that he is presently trying to get out of this building disguised as one of us.

LEADER
Are you challenging my authority?

FINCH
No sir, I'm trying to run an investigation--

LEADER
I am trying to run a country! When I tell you, Mr. Finch, the terrorist is dead, then the terrorist is dead! If you continue to suggest otherwise then you will leave me no choice but to have you arrested on charges of sedition. Do I make myself clear?

He eyes the room. Everyone is silent.

LEADER
Now, it is imperative for the people of London to know that they are safe, that the terrorist is dead and everything is under control.

The Leader storms past Finch who looks at Dascombe and bites down on his pipe.

EXT. CITY STREET

One of the Ear's black vans has been modified with large speakers wired to the roof. As the van rolls down the street, the speakers drone with a looped message.

SPEAKERS
The terrorist is dead. No further threat exists. Everything is under control.

Out of the back, soldiers hurl leaflets that swirl and flutter in the van's wake.

The little girl on the bicycle that we saw earlier stops and picks up one of the leaflets.

It has a picture with the body of Roger Dascombe beneath the headline, "The terrorist is dead! London is safe once again!"

LITTLE GIRL
Bollocks.

She crumbles the leaflet and throws it.

LITTLE GIRL
Bollocks!

She gets off her bike and takes something out of the backpack.

LITTLE GIRL
He's not dead! It's all bollocks!

Turning to a nearby wall, she spray paints a large circle around a "V".

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

A recording of VTV plays on the small television.

V
...If you give me the line of the queen, I'll give you your secret dream.

Dominic freezes the image; V stares at them, smiling.

FINCH
Play it again.

DOMINIC
Come on, Finch. We've seen it fifty times. I mean, after what they done to you. I don't know why we're even trying to stop him.

Finch stares out the window.

FINCH
I don't know. For twenty seven years, I've been at this job. Twenty seven years, I've done what I've been told to do. Maybe that's all there is to it. I'm just a dumb old dog. A dumb old dog that only knows one trick.

DOMINIC
That ain't it, Finch. It's more than that. I know you. It's something personal with this one.

Finch smiles.

FINCH
Maybe. And maybe I'm not ready for a revolution.

DOMINIC
Well, we got less than thirty hours to stop it.

FINCH
We will.

DOMINIC
How?

FINCH
It's on the tape. I know it. I can feel it. He did this for a reason. He needs something.

DOMINIC
What?

FINCH
The line of the Queen?

DOMINIC
But what does that mean?

FINCH
Maybe it's a line from Shakespeare. Or a book. I don't know.

He rewinds and starts the tape.

V
... This wasn't even my idea, was it?

FINCH
But right here. He's talking to someone. Someone specific. Someone who knows what he wants.

V
If you think back, you'll--

INT. CONRAD'S BEDROOM

V continues on a different television.

V
Remember that night, whispering in your lover's arms.

Helen Heyer is lying on her bed, eating chocolates, watching V through calculating eyes.

At her feet, we hear a suckling noise that suddenly stops.

CONRAD
Helen? Helen, why did you want that tape?

HELEN
Shut up, Conrad. I'm thinking.

She shoves her foot back into his mouth and he continues to suck on it and each of her toes.

V
... now you've become a part of mine.

HELEN
How? How did you know that?

Conrad moves up her ankle, licking and kissing his way to her knee.

CONRAD
Know what, my love?

V
Give me the love of the Queen and I'll give you your secret dream.

She freezes the tape. Her eyes light up and she smiles back at him.

HELEN
All right. You have a deal.

Conrad licks along the inside of her thigh until she slaps him.

HELEN
Oh no! Not you, Conrad. Not yet. Here you can have a chocolate. Open up. Open!

She shoves the candy in his mouth.

HELEN
Good boy. As for the rest of the box, perhaps when you're Leader.

She smiles.

HELEN
Right now I need something else Conrad. I need you to use that pretty little brain for me. You know all about the old underground, don't you?

He nods still gagged with the candy.

HELEN
I need to know everything, understand? Everything.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

There are cameras set in front of the large black leather chair so that the flashing images and data of the Fate computer system can be seen behind the Leader.

A makeup artist mattes down the Leader's lipstick.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Ready in five, Leader.

The makeup artist adjusts one last hair and scurries off.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
In four, three...

He points and the camera's red light goes on.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The same family, the same squabbling children watching as a "Special Bulletin" interrupts a laugh track.

LEADER
Good evening London. As Leader of this great country, I felt it imperative to speak with you and to assure you once and for all that the shadow that recently fell across our land has indeed passed.

WOMAN
Oh, for fuck's sake.

EXT. TELEVISION STORE - NIGHT

No one is watching.

LEADER
What we have endured this long year was no accident, no mere coincidence. This was not a simple act of terror conducted by a singular madman. No, this was a test.

INT. KITTY KAT KELLER

A drunk struggles up onto his bar stool blocking the TV.

LEADER
It was not me, nor the Party, nor the government that was threatened this year. It was our beliefs. Our faith. I believe that God himself bore witness to our struggle and like Job I believe that we have been vindicated.

The drunk raises his glass.

DRUNK
Remember fifth of November!

The bar cheers.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The Leader reaches for his Bible.

LEADER
How do I know this? Let me read to you where I found the answer, where I so often find the answer. In the Scripture. Revelations.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

The megaphones blast the Leader's voice.

LEADER (V.O.)
"If any man have an ear, let him hear."

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

There are stacks of printout everywhere.

LEADER (V.O.)
"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the Saints."

Finch stops reading, listening to the radio.

LEADER (V.O.)
"And I beheld another beast coming out of the Earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spake as a dragon."

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Another radio crackles with the Leader's voice.

LEADER (V.O.)
"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from Heaven on the Earth in the sight of men."

V nods, almost laughing as Evey enters the gallery.

LEADER (V.O.)
"And he deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth by the means of those miracles which he had the power to do--"

EVEY
Oh, V, turn it off, please.

V
Of course, my dear.

He reaches over and changes the frequency. We hear voices, hushed and secret but we recognize them.

CREEDY (V.O.)
But how does he know?

HELEN (V.O.)
I don't know. All I know is he does... And I know what he wants.

The voices are labored, punctuated by gasps and moans.

EVEY
What is that, V?

V
That, Evey, is what I have been waiting for.

CREEDY (V.O.)
Do you know what I want? I want you just like this... Bent over that black leather chair...

We are pulled by the radio into--

INT. CREEDY'S BEDROOM

Where we see a tiny microphone hidden in the ceiling light above the bed.

Helen moans as we drift down, glimpsing Helen, her arms reaching for the edges of the bed, her back arching up towards Creedy, behind her, smiling.

CREEDY
What about Conrad?

HELEN
I told you. I'll handle Conrad and V will take care of Susan. The mob will take care of the guard and then... You can use the Finger to take over.

CREEDY
Use the Finger? You mean like this?

He inserts a finger into her.

HELEN
Oh... oh... that is vulgar...

CREEDY
But you like it?

HELEN
Yes, oh yes, oh you're a pig, Peter...

CREEDY
That I am, misses. But I'm the pig that's gonna be running this country.

That sends a shiver through Helen's body.

HELEN
Yes and I'm... I'm going to be Eva... Oh Eva...

Her eyes close and her fists knot the sheets.

HELEN
"Don't cry for me Argen... oh Argen... Argen...tina!

The word is almost lost in her orgasm.

EXT. LONDON

The sun rises over London. It is the morning of the fourth.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

Finch looks through the blinds at the morning sun. He has been up all night. He checks his watch: 6:00am.

FINCH
Eighteen hours.

Rubbing the knot in his neck, he turns back to his office which is now buried beneath mounds of paper.

Dominic is passed out, sprawled on the couch, and clutching a printout from Spencer's "Fairy Queen."

FINCH
Dominic!

Dominic jumps, immediately searching the printout.

FINCH
Dominic, go home.

DOMINIC
But I've still got over three hundred lines from The Fairy Queen.

FINCH
Forget it. There's no more time. You go home and get some rest. You're going to need it tonight.

Dominic lets the papers fall to the floor.

DOMINIC
He's got us, doesn't he, Finch?

FINCH
Yes, he does.

EXT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

Conrad pulls his car into his reserved space.

INT. CAR

Helen holds Conrad's chin the way a mother holds a child when she is telling them something important.

HELEN
Now listen to me, Conrad. This is the most important moment of our lives. Everything I've worked and hoped for comes to this. Susan is a very dangerous man, especially now, that's why I need you, Conrad. I need you to be stronger than him. I need you to be the better man. Understand?

Conrad nods.

HELEN
If you do this Conrad, and you do it right, I'm going to turn you from the little man I married into the man of my dreams.

CONRAD
Oh, Helen.

He embraces her to kiss but she turns her perfectly painted lips.

HELEN
Not on the lips.

Ardently, he kisses her cheek.

INT. FINCH'S OFFICE

Finch sits alone, palms pressed to his bleary eyes.

FINCH
Give it up, old man. You're not even sure you want to stop him.

With a red pen, he begins absently drawing red circles around any V he sees on any piece of paper.

Victims. Vectors. Values. Victory. Words from quotes and lists.

Suddenly, he stops. Carefully, as if reaching to touch a butterfly, he slips a single sheet out from the sheaves covering his desk.

The paper has a long list: the names of all the Queens of England. He has circled in red the V of Victoria.

When it hits him, it hits him like a falling safe.

FINCH
Christ! That's it! It's got to be it!

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The intercom clicks on.

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
Sir. Mr. Heyer is here to see you. Says it's urgent. And he's here with his wife. Sir.

LEADER
His wife?

LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
Sir. yes. sir-- Wait. we can't go--

The door slaps open.

HELEN
Leader. I'm terribly sorry but I absolutely must speak with you.

The Leader waves the Lieutenant off.

HELEN
I have something to tell you. something important but--

She glances at Conrad.

HELEN
I can tell you and only you. In private.

The Leader studies her.

HELEN
It is a matter of national security.

EXT. CITY STREET

In his car, Finch races to a corner and slams on the brakes. He gets out, staring at a shadow on the ground: a "V" in a circle.

The shadow is cast by a sign for Victoria Station. part of the abandoned subway.

The gates are chained shut. He fires his pistol into the lock, kicks open the rusting gates, and descends into the underground.

INT. LEADER'S PRIVATE QUARTERS

The Leader closes the door behind them.

LEADER
Now what's this all about, Mrs. Heyer?

HELEN
Please, forgive me. I've been so afraid, afraid to come here to talk to you. I thought he must know, I was terrified he knew but I had to come because I knew you were the only one that can protect me.

LEADER
Protect you from what?

She is unable to go on, seemingly about to burst into tears.

LEADER
Come now, Mrs. Heyer.

He touches her and it is all she needs. She buries her face into his chest.

HELEN
You won't let him hurt me, will you?

LEADER
Let who hurt you?

HELEN
The terrorist.

LEADER
The terrorist is dead.

HELEN
Oh, how I wanted to believe it, Leader, but I know it's not true.

LEADER
How?

HELEN
Because I know who the terrorist is.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

Conrad is alone with Fate. He glances about nervously, moving closer and closer. His fingers reach out and graze the main keyboard. Taking a deep breath, he turns and begins to type.

INT. PRIVATE QUARTERS

The Leader takes hold of Helen by her shoulders.

LEADER
Who? Who is it, woman?

HELEN
It's Conrad, Leader. Conrad. My husband is the terrorist.

LEADER
What?!

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

Conrad accesses the department of water and power. He finds the correct file and begins rerouting power to a once dead system.

INT. V'S TRAIN STATION

A hanging light suddenly sizzles to life. V looks up, smiling.

INT. LEADER'S PRIVATE QUARTERS

The Leader stares hard at Helen.

LEADER
How do you know?

HELEN
I saw him, Leader. In the middle of the night, I heard something. I went to the landing and that's when I saw it.

She clutches him.

HELEN
That mask. That hideous smiling mask.

LEADER
But how did you know it was Heyer?

HELEN
I know, Leader. I know the way a woman knows.

LEADER
But you have no proof?

HELEN
Proof?

LEADER
Yes, proof? This is an extremely delicate situation, Mrs. Heyer. It has been reported that the terrorist is dead. It would be a catastrophe to arrest a man now without concrete, conclusive proof. Do you have any evidence at all?

Tears well up in Helen's eyes as she shakes her head.

LEADER
But if you're right, if Heyer is indeed the terrorist...

His eyes fly wide and he spins away from her, throwing open the door.

HELEN
Leader! Wait!

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

Conrad sits calmly across the room.

CONRAD
Is everything all right? Helen?

LEADER
Yes, Mr. Heyer, your wife has done her duty to her country.

He turns to Helen.

LEADER
Don't worry, Mrs. Heyer. You will be taken care of. I will launch an immediate investigation and I promise you will be the first to know when an arrest will be made.

CONRAD
Investigation of what?

LEADER
Subversion, Mr. Heyer. Your wife was privy to the dialogue of subversives. That's all you need to know at this time. Lieutenant!

The Lieutenant appears almost instantly.

LEADER
The Heyers are leaving. I need to see Mr. Creedy at once.

Helen looks up at the Leader, a smile hidden near the corners of her perfect red lips.

HELEN
Thank you, sir.

The Leader nods.

INT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

Helen and Conrad get out of the elevator, standing beneath the rows of new party flags that line the lobby.

HELEN
I want you to go straight to your office and wait for me to call. When I do, I want you to come immediately home. Understood?

CONRAD
Yes, Helen.

She embraces him, pressing her body against his.

HELEN
Oh, Conrad, I'm so proud of you.

CONRAD
I did it, Helen. I did it, didn't I?

HELEN
Tonight. Conrad.

CONRAD
Tonight.

HELEN
I promise you will never forget tonight.

She almost kisses him.

HELEN
Goodbye. Conrad.

Smiling, she pivots on her heel and heads for the door. He reaches for her when--

GUARD
Mr. Heyer! Mr. Heyer!

The front desk guard rushes towards him.

CONRAD
Yes?

GUARD
Sir, this package arrived for you, sir.

He hands him a small, brown wrapped box.

CONRAD
Thank you.

He looks back for Helen but she is already gone.

INT. SUBWAY

A single flashlight beam creeps toward us as Finch searches the detritus of the dead train line.

INT. CONRAD'S CAR

Sitting at a stoplight, Conrad decides to open the package. Inside is a cassette tape. The light changes and a car behind him honks. He starts forward and inserts the tape.

INT. SUBWAY

Finch crawls up onto the platform of V's hidden station, staring at the beautiful old train car.

INT. CONRAD'S CAR

Strangling the steering wheel, Conrad listens to the tape. The speedometer climbs as everything seems to accelerate.

TAPE (V.O.)
Do you know what I want? I want you just like this... bent over that black leather chair.

Helen moans.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Finch steps inside the car, his flashlight sweeping over the stacks of gelignite.

FINCH
Oh my god.

INT. CONRAD'S CAR

A scream builds in Conrad. With tears in his eyes, he stares out the windshield but sees only the images created by the tape.

TAPE (V.O.)
Use the Finger?..You mean like this?...Oh... That's vulgar...But you like it?...Yesss...oh yes.

Conrad loses control and the car careens up onto the sidewalk and smashes into a brick wall.

Lifting his bloodied forehead, Conrad looks out and sees the ubiquitous poster partially destroyed by the crash: "Strength through purity, purity through faith."

INT. TRAIN CAR

Finch hears something and jerks back, almost falling out of the car. Aiming his gun, he finds no one. He turns and bolts.

As the sound of his footsteps fade, V steps out of the shadows.

INT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

The Leader's Lieutenant looks up from his desk and sees Finch rushing towards him.

FINCH
Is the Leader in?

LIEUTENANT
Yes, but he's meeting with the Captain of the Guard.

FINCH
Perfect.

LIEUTENANT
Mr. Finch, you can't go in--

Finch charges through the doors.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The Leader and his Captain turn.

LEADER
Mr. Finch?

FINCH
Leader, I need as many men the Captain can spare and I need them right now.

CAPTAIN
What for?

FINCH
To capture codename V.

EXT. CONRAD'S HOUSE

Creedy opens the trunk of his car. In the phosphorescent glow of the streetlight, the set of knives gleam. He bundles the costume that he tried to plant on Finch into his arms, then slams the trunk.

Above, a window blind that was cracked open snaps shut.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The Leader moves toward Finch.

FINCH
He's underground. The old subway. I know exactly what he's going to do. If we move quickly, we can be there, waiting for him.

INT. CONRAD'S HOUSE

Conrad waits, hidden inside a bedroom closet. He hears the front door close and his grip tightens around the handle of a long, steel-necked hammer.

INT. LEADER'S OFFICE

The Leader is steadily convincing himself of something.

FINCH
Leader, every second we delay...

The Leader lifts his hand, silencing Finch.

LEADER
I'm coming with you.

GUARD
Sir--

LEADER
There will be no discussion--

GUARD
But if Mr. Finch is right--

LEADER
I am sick to death of this terrorist being everywhere and nowhere! I will judge whether Mr. Finch is right and I will judge it with my own eyes! Do I make myself clear, Captain?

CAPTAIN
Sir, yes, sir!

Finch is suddenly overwhelmed by a feeling that is common to chess players. It is the disturbing sense that you have just done exactly what your opponent wanted.

LEADER
Is there a problem, Mr. Finch?

FINCH
No... no sir.

LEADER
Good. Captain, mobilize your men.

CAPTAIN
Sir, yes, sir.

LEADER
We'll find this bloody bastard and we will finish him.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Evey sits in the gallery, reading Pynchon's "V" just as V had done. She can suddenly feel V watching her.

EVEY
V?

V
Yes.

Evey smiles as V steps out of the shadows.

EVEY
V, what's going to happen?

V
Change, Evey. That's all. Just change.

EVEY
Is it going to be violent?

V
Yes, I suppose it will.

INT. CONRAD'S HOUSE

Creedy empties a bottom drawer, making room to hide the costume. As he does, the closet door behind him slowly creeps open.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V stands at the jukebox.

EVEY
But why? Why must it be violent?

V
Because, Evey, that is the nature of change. She is a temperamental creature that appears in earnest rarely but, when she does, she will wear one of two faces. The first face is the destroyer. It is lamentable but all true change begins with death.

INT. CREEDY'S HOUSE

A dark figure stands over Creedy. The hammer raises, a slash of silver against the velvety darkness.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V punches a button on the jukebox just as--

INT. CREEDY'S HOUSE

The hammer falls with a sickening soft crunch.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

The song begins to play; a melancholy song that says good-bye to love.

INT. CREEDY'S HOUSE

Blood pours down Creedy's snarling face, he snatches one of V's knives as another hammer blow cracks through his collar bone.

He screams, lunging at Conrad.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

V listens to the song, the smiling eyes somehow knowing:

INT. CONRAD'S HOUSE

The hammer falls again and again until the metal head is slick with blood and meat.

Conrad stumbles back, dropping the hammer. He looks down at the hilt of the knife protruding from his stomach. He yanks it out and holds V's knife which is bright red with his own blood.

He collapses to the floor.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

The song continues.

EVEY
What is the other face, V?

V
The other face? She is the true face of change. The face of the creator. She is the one that remakes the world. Evey?

EVEY
Yes, V?

V
May I ask you for a favor?

EVEY
Of course.

V
It is a small thing but it would mean a great deal to me.

EVEY
Tell me, V.

V
I've never danced before. I've thought about it many times, here in this room, listening to the music. But I've always been alone.

Evey smiles and crosses to him.

EVEY
It would be my pleasure.

He opens his arms and she steps into them. They dance, standing very close, his gloved hand holding tightly to hers, her smile against his.

EXT. CITY STREET

Dozens of military vehicles swarm around the entrance to Victoria Station while heavily armed men pour through the gates of the underground.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

The song ends.

V
Thank you, Evey. You are an excellent dancer.

EVEY
All it takes is a little practice.

V
Alas, I have run out of time.

He bows, pressing his frozen lips to her hand. Evey is suddenly nervous.

EVEY
V? What are you going to do?

V
Don't you remember? I have a date tonight, Evey.

EVEY
You're coming back though, aren't you?

She seizes hold of his hand.

EVEY
V, I won't let you leave unless you promise me that you will come back.

V
Of course, I'll be back. You don't think you can be rid of me now, do you?

EVEY
Just promise.

V
I promise.

She lets him go.

INT. TRAIN STATION

Soldiers swarm through the station. Susan stares in shock, outraged by the mere presence of the train.

LEADER
Mark my words, Mr. Finch, this man is going to become an example so that every man, woman, and child in this country will remember what happens to those who would ever think to stand against the state.

He turns to the Captain.

LEADER
Captain, I need a gas unit down here with enough nerve gas to fill every rat-hole in these tunnels.

Suddenly the lights go out.

FINCH
I don't think that will be necessary.

The Leader smiles.

LEADER
There are over one hundred of the best trained soldiers in this country down here. Let him come.

INT. TRAIN TUNNELS

Five soldiers creep forward in a tight formation, their flashlights probing every nook and cranny.

Behind them, a secret passage opens and V steps out.

He is among them with frightful speed, a grinning dervish with blades like metal fangs ripping and rending flesh, slashing bright in the flashlight.

Other soldiers rush towards the screams and gunfire but they find only five bodies and warm blood running down the walls.

LEADER
Captain, what's happening?

RADIO (V.O.)
No sign, sir. Repeat, no sign of him.

CAPTAIN
They lost him.

From the opposite end, there is another series of screams and machine gun fire that lights up the dark tunnel for a moment. Then, nothing.

FINCH
This... this is a mistake.

LEADER
Don't tell me you're a coward, Mr. Finch.

Back in the tunnels, V drops from above, his cloak a swirling cloud of squid ink that hides him in the darkness.

Again, quicksilver knives lash out, drawing fonts of blood.

INT. TRAIN STATION

Finch can feel the panic that is spreading through the tunnel.

FINCH
Leader, we have to get out of here!

LEADER
This was your idea.

FINCH
It was a mistake. This is what he wants. He knows us, Leader. He knows us too well. We have to get out of here before it's too late--

A voice rings out from hidden speakers, echoing through the tunnels.

V (V.O.)
Good evening citizens of London. This is the voice of Fate. Your fate..

LEADER
What trick is this?

V (V.O.)
Tonight, the face of London is going to change and I am going to offer you the chance to change with her. Your Leader is finished. He will not leave these tunnels alive.

The Leader screams to be heard over the resonant voice of V.

LEADER
This is an outrage! I order you not to listen to this!

V (V.O.)
At midnight tonight, the Head will be destroyed and new era will begin. You must now decide if you are going to be a part of that era.

Everywhere, terrified soldiers listen to the voice.

V (V.O.)
You can choose to stay here and die with your Leader or you can choose to be free. The decision is yours and yours alone.

LEADER
Captain, order all your men to fall back and secure this position!

V (V.O.)
Some of you have wives. Some of you have families. All of you have lives. Consider each of them as you ask yourself, are they a part of the past, or are they a part of the future?

CAPTAIN
Fall back. Fall back and secure the central platform.

Deep in the tunnel, two soldiers look at each other. Simultaneously, they drop their guns and run.

LEADER
Any man that disobeys this order will be court martialed!

Groups of soldiers drop their weapons and disappear into the shadows.

LEADER
Captain! Captain. where are your men?

The station fills with the sound of boots running wildly away.

LEADER
Goddammit. I will not tolerate this insubordination! I want those deserters shot. Captain.

Finch slowly draws back away from the Leader.

LEADER
Shot on sight!

The few men on the platform are soon the only men left.

CAPTAIN
You! You! Point position. We're getting out of here! Now!

A knife sings through the air and buries itself in the Captain's chest. With a tiny rasp, he falls to the ground.

The remaining men bolt.

LEADER
Traitors! You cowards!

He grabs for the Captain's machine gun.

LEADER
I know who you are! I'll see you hang! Every last one of you!

"You" echoes down the dark empty throat of the tunnel.

The Leader looks around, his flashlight sweeping in big arcs as the realizes that he is alone.

LEADER
Finch? Finch! Finch, goddammit, you can't leave me! Don't leave me!

V
You are going to die as you ruled--

The Leader screams, whipping around towards the voice.

V

Alone.

The smile is as cold and as sharp as the knife that flicks from his hand.

The Leader raises his gun just when the knife sinks into his shoulder.

Howling in pain, he drops the gun.

LEADER

Damn you! Damn you!

V smiles into the spot of his flashlight.

LEADER

Conrad? Is that you? You're working with Finch, aren't you? And Creedy! You're all in this together!

V closes in.

LEADER

Who are you?

V

You, most of all, should know, Leader. You created me. Without you, I would never be. More than life, Leader, you gave me purpose.

V draws his final blade.

V

"He that killeth with the sword, shall be killed with the sword."

V raises the knife.

LEADER

Noooo!

FINCH

Don't move!

V and the Leader turn to find Finch aiming a machine gun at V.

LEADER

Mr. Finch! Oh god, Mr. Finch!

FINCH
Drop the knife.

V does and Susan begins an almost hysterical laugh.

LEADER
Oh, I knew it, Mr. Finch. I knew you wouldn't desert me. You're a good man, Finch. A damn good man.

FINCH
No, Mr. Susan. No, I'm not. I'm a man who does his job and does what he's told. For twenty seven years, that's all I've been.

He steps toward V, staring into his smiling black eyes.

LEADER
Careful, Mr. Finch. He's quick as the devil.

Finch ignores the Leader.

FINCH
I've read Delia's diary over and over all year. It sickens me but I am unable to judge her. I am as guilty as she.

LEADER
Mr. Finch, what are you doing? Shoot him. Kill the bastard, Finch.

FINCH
I have no excuse. I did what I was told to do.

LEADER
Finch, I order you to shoot him! Finch!

FINCH
My job was to find you and catch you. I've done my job. I've done it for the last time. I'm tired of it. I'm tired of it all.

He tosses the gun to the Leader.

FINCH
Kill him yourself if you can.

The Leader seethes, his eyes boring into Finch.

FINCH
Thank you, V. And goodbye.

V
Goodbye, Mr. Finch.

The machine gun burst shatters the quiet concrete silence. Finch falls dead at V's feet.

LEADER
I warned you, Finch, the penalty for treason is death.

He aims the gun at V.

LEADER
Are you ready to die?

V
The real question is, are you?

The Leader laughs.

LEADER
Do you really believe you can pick up that knife before I pull this trigger?

V
No. But I don't have to.

Almost casually, V bends down to pick up the knife--

The Leader screams and fires.

Bullets knock V back a bit but he continues, grabbing the knife and standing.

Eyes widening with disbelief, the Leader fires another blast as V begins walking towards him.

The machine gun roars, bullets shredding out through the back of V's cloak as he continues with short deliberate steps until-

The hammer clicks against the pin. The gun is empty.

V stands before him.

V
You see? You cannot kill me. There is no flesh and blood within this cloak to kill. There is only an idea.

V smiles.

V
And ideas are bulletproof.

The Leader screams.

V drives the knife into his heart, killing him instantly.

V stands alone amidst the carnage and seeping pools of red.

His body wavers. He takes his hands out from beneath his cloak and reveals his gloves, wet with blood.

INT. CONRAD'S HOUSE

The front door opens and Helen enters.

HELEN
Creedy? Creedy, you dumb bastard, you left your car parked in front.

She walks up the stairs to the bedroom.

HELEN
What did I tell you? Creedy.

INT. BEDROOM

She steps into the room, her sole and heel sinking into the plush carpet soaked with blood.

HELEN
Oh my god.

When she sees Creedy's head mashed open.. she covers her mouth:

CONRAD
... Helen.

Conrad has propped himself against the bed.

HELEN
Conrad! What have you done?

CONRAD
I won, Helen. I did it. I won. I'm the better man.

He crawls toward her, slipping on the wet carpet.

CONRAD
We've been through a bad patch, Helen. But *now*, he's gone... There's nothing to come between us...

He reaches for her foot, his hand gloved with wet red.

HELEN
Don't touch me! You stupid piece of shit! You've ruined it! I had it all planned perfectly and you've ruined it!

She checks her watch: two hours to midnight.

HELEN
I have to get out of here! I have to get away!

Conrad seizes hold of her ankle.

CONRAD
Helen--

HELEN
No! Let go! Now!

The look in his eye frightens her. She tries to kick free of him but he won't let go. Twisting, she reaches for the door but slips on the carpet.

HELEN
Conrad, damn you! Let me go!

CONRAD
No, Helen, you're not leaving me...not this time...not ever.

He crawls up her body still clutching the bloody knife.

HELEN
No, please! Oh god, no! Oh god, please help me!

Conrad raises the knife.

CONRAD
No one can help us, Helen. God is dead.

The knife falls.

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Evey hears V on the spiral staircase.

EVEY
V?

Scarlet footprints trail behind V as he struggles down the stairs.

EVEY
You came back.

He nods and then collapses, rolling down the rest of the stairs.

EVEY
V! V!

Running to him, she falls to his side. His clothes are slick with blood.

EVEY
Oh god, what happened?

V
Evey...

EVEY
You need a doctor.

V
It's too late for that...

EVEY
No, don't say that!

V
Evey, listen to me. I've not long and there are things that must be said.

His voice strains beneath the mask.

V
I have done that which I came to do. Now, it is time for me to rest and with me the past will, at last, find peace.

Trembling, Evey holds him.

V
But the world, the world is not saved... Do not think that, when the fires die and the smoke clears, there is no miracle... there is only a path... upon which they must learn to rule themselves.

EVEY
Yes, they need you, V.

V
Not me, Evey, not me. I told you I am the villain. The destroyer... But yes, they will need help...

He reaches up and wipes a tear from her cheek.

V
I kept my promise to you, Evey... Now you must promise me.

EVEY
What?

V
Promise me... you will discover the face under this mask... but you will never look beneath it.

EVEY
I don't understand.

V
Promise me. Please...

EVEY
I promise.

V
Sweet Eve. Wherever I shall go, I shall always love you.

EVEY
V, you are not going anywhere!

V
Midnight... Midnight. Eve... Make them remember...

EVEY
You're not going to die, V!

V
Let me be there, Evey, when it begins... Please, let me hear the music, one last time... my music...

EVEY
I won't let you die!

V
I know you won't... I know...

EVEY
V!

V
My love... Ave Atque vale...

Holding him as tight as she can, she feels his life drain away, slipping through her arms in the way the last grains of sand pour through the neck of the hourglass.

She buries her face beside his and weeps.

EXT. CITY STREET

An enormous crowd has begun to gather in the streets surrounding the New Government Building. With the crowd, a restlessness swells against each barricade erected by the military.

A sergeant stands on an armored car, speaking through a megaphone.

SERGEANT
Return to your homes! There is nothing to see! The terrorist is dead!

RABBLE ROUSER #1
'E ain't ded!

RABBLE ROUSER #2
'E'll be here, just likes he said!

INT. SHADOW GALLERY

Evey huddles against the stair railing, her face tear-stained, staring at the lifeless body of V.

EVEY (V.O.)
I remember... I remember staring at the mask, at that smile.

She touches the mask, her fingers finding its edge.

EVEY (V.O.)
Part of me couldn't believe he was dead and maybe that was why. The smile was still the same. It made me want to tear it off so I could see the face, so I could see that he was dead.

Her fingers stop.

EVEY (V.O.)
But I had promised.

V (V.O.)
You will discover the face under this mask but you will never look beneath it.

EVEY (V.O.)
I began to try to imagine his face. Of course, I had long pictured my father behind that smile but I knew in my heart that V was not my father.

Evey stares into the eyes, the dark, empty eyes.

EVEY (V.O.)
Yet every time I pictured another face, any face, something was lost, something important was somehow diminished. V was more than a face. V was V.

Her expression changes.

EVEY (V.O.)
And then, quite suddenly, quite naturally, I realized whose face must be beneath that mask. It was the only face that mattered.

EVEY
I won't let you die.

V (V.O.)
I know you won't... I know.

A small smile creeps across her face.

EXT. CITY STREET

Midnight approaches and the crowd feels it. Spilling everywhere, they fill the streets like a flood.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Evey sets a final violet carson on the chest of V. He is laying on a bed made of gelignite, covered in roses.

Touching his mask, she bends over him.

EVEY
Goodbye, my love.

Tenderly, she-presses her lips to the smile, her eyes closing, her final tears blinking free.

She backs away and V smiles, his lips wet with her kiss, his cheek wet with her tears.

EVEY (V.O.)
"Ave Atque vale."

On the train platform, Evey reaches through the window and starts the train.

EVEY (V.O.)
I looked it up the next morning.

The wheels churn as the train lurches forward.

EVEY (V.O.)
"Hail and farewell."

V (V.O.)
"Make them remember..."

She watches the train disappear into the tunnel.

EVEY
They will, my love. They will.

EXT. CITY STREET

The crowd surges against a barricade when a voice cries out across the city echoing through the megaphones on every corner.

EVEY
"Remember, remember. The fifth of November!"

High above the gathered mass, a masked figure steps out onto a roof parapet.

The crowd explodes.

INT. SUBWAY

The train barrels along, screaming against its rusted rails.

EXT. ROOFTOP

Dressed as V, Evey stands on the roof's edge, speaking into a microphone.

EVEY
I have come here tonight to keep a promise. A promise that is over four hundred years old. Tonight I am here to give you your freedom!

Again, the crowd bursts into a frenzy.

EVEY
Since mankind's dawn a handful of oppressors have accepted the responsibility over our lives, responsibility that we should have accepted ourselves. By doing so, they took our power. By doing nothing, we gave it away.

The voice booms over the mesmerized crowd.

EVEY
Tonight, our world will change. Our leaders will be gone and we must choose what comes next. A return to the chains of others or lives of our own. A world of the past or one of the future.

She feels the sea of humanity beneath her, almost channeling their energy.

EVEY
Let us choose carefully, London, and when we do, let us mark well and remember, remember this fifth of November!

The crowd screams as one and their scream becomes--

INT. SUBWAY

The train hurling like a bullet through a gun barrel. Ahead the tracks end, buried beneath the rubble of the collapsed tunnel.

INT. TRAIN CAR

Inside the rattling train, V lays in perfect repose.

V (V.O.)
Let me be there, Evey, when it begins...

EXT. ROOFTOPS

Hidden and alone, Evey pulls the mask from her face.

V (V.O.)
Please let me hear the music... one last time... my music.

Almost unconsciously, Evey raises her hand and coaxes the first soft notes as he had once done.

V (V.O.)
At first, you have to listen carefully.

The violins of the 1812 overture steadily rise.

V (V.O.)
Ah, yes. There it is. Beautiful, is it not?

Evey smiles, her hand still gently conducting.

EVEY
Yes, my love. Yes it is.

INT. SUBWAY

With the clash of cymbals, the train crashes into the wall of rubble.

EXT. NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

The entire building opens like a time-lapsed rose blooming with brilliant orange petals of flame.

EXT. CITY STREET

The crowd is awash in the baptismal glow of erupting flame.

EXT. ROOFTOP

Evey watches the explosion, a star-burst of flaming debris searing against the night sky like fireworks.

EXT. CITY STREET

The masses burst through the barricades with a euphoric frenzy.

EXT. ROOFTOP

The explosion begins to slowly die.

EVEY (V.O.)
I know that there is only one way to repay him for what he did.

She looks down at the mask.

EVEY (V.O.)
And I know that that way is going to take a lot of hard work.

She smiles.

EVEY (V.O.)
I know this like I know the sun will rise tomorrow and beneath that new sun, our work will begin.

The fire fades and Evey turns, cradling the mask, and walks away.

FADE OUT